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# CLAVERING AND HIS DAUGHTER

By Foxcroft Davis

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THE return of a woman once married to a home under her father's roof is always a tragic episode. It implies death or disaster and means the giving up of the prestige and independence a woman is supposed to attain by marriage. It may be the most sordid or the most dignified of tragedies that brings her back. Nevertheless it is a tragedy, and almost invariably has its sordid aspects, because it is oftenest poverty, to the accompaniment of divorce or death, which leads her, wounded and smarting and hungering, to that last remaining refuge—her father's house.

To Elizabeth Darrell, on the gloomy October day when she reached Washington from England, it seemed as if all the cruel reasons which ever brought a woman to such a pass existed in her case. She had pondered over all the sources of her unhappiness with that curious passion for the analysis of their own misfortunes which is peculiar to women and poets. Her general and specific quarrel against fate had not been absent for a moment from her memory since she first undertook that long journey overseas. As every hour brought her nearer to her old home the pain and the apprehension of pain increased. One mitigation she had hoped for—the sight of her father's kind, handsome old face as soon as she reached Washington; his courtly placing of his hand within her own; his valiant pretense that her home-coming was a happy one. But her despatch

on leaving the steamer had not arrived in time, and when she reached the station there was no one to meet her.

It was a cool, damp autumn afternoon; a fine rain was falling and a general air of misery brooded over everything. With that dazed intelligence about places which were once well known but are now half forgotten, Elizabeth watched the streets and squares through which her cab rolled. She was forced to observe that Washington had become a fine city in the ten years since she had seen it. But, accustomed to the crowded thoroughfares of European cities, the quiet streets seemed to her dreary and deserted beyond expression. Was everybody dead in those silent, handsome houses? The cab stopped at last before a tall, plain house in the northwest, quite far out. The finer residences were crowding the poor house in an unseemly manner. Elizabeth remembered it as surrounded by vacant lots, tenanted only by real estate agents' signs. Now the region was well and handsomely built up. The house, commonplace and shabby, looked still more commonplace and shabby from its fashionable surroundings. It was near the end of the square, where the smaller street debouched into a splendid avenue. On the corner was a fine white stone house with an entrance on the avenue and a porte-cochère on the side street.

It made Elizabeth Darrell feel more of a forlorn stranger than ever when she saw the new luxury that surrounded

her father's poor old house. She descended from the cab and with a faltering hand rang the bell.

Her ring was answered by a negro woman, stout, elderly and decent, but far removed from the smart English maids to whom Elizabeth had been long accustomed. However, so strong is early habitude that the sight of this honest black face gave Elizabeth the first sentiment of home she had felt since her widowhood. In that black face was a dog-like softness and kindness, and in the voice a compassionate yet deprecatory quality, which is not heard often in any but an African voice.

"You is Mis' 'Lizbeth," she said kindly, holding the door wide. "De gin'l, he war'n' lookin' fer you 'twell tomorrer—but come right in heah."

There were signs of preparation within, but the room designed for Elizabeth—the best bedroom in the house—was not ready. Serena—for so she informed Elizabeth was her name—was full of humble, soft apologies.

"De gin'l will be mighty worried dat he war'n' home when you come—he was countin' on meckin' you mighty comfortable."

To which Elizabeth, her spirit dying within her at the aspect of things, answered:

"Is not the front bedroom in the third story furnished? Perhaps I could go there."

Serena eagerly led the way. It was the room which had been Elizabeth's ten years ago. She had chosen it because General Brandon was always entertaining some of his relations, and had the old-time idea that hospitality to a guest meant the upsetting of all family arrangements; so Elizabeth had chosen this upper room for her own, secure in not being turned out of it to accommodate some ex-Confederate general, judge or other person distinguished in "our great Civil War," as General Brandon always spoke of it. The windows had a good outlook upon the blue Potomac and on the misty line of the Virginia hills far beyond. Otherwise it had not a single recommendation.

Serena, her honest heart in her beady black eyes, was all sympathy and attention. She brought tea, called Elizabeth "honey" and talked in her slow and soothing voice of "de gin'l." Evidently General Brandon was a hero to his maid-of-all-work.

At last Serena went out, and Elizabeth was alone. She sat down before the little dressing-table and removed her widow's bonnet and veil. And remembering that when she had last seen herself in that mirror she had been a bride and in the glory of her youth, she could not but study the changes in herself. She had then been beautiful, in a vivid, irregular manner, and ought to have been so still, as she was but little past her thirtieth birthday. But she saw plainly that she was haggard, that she was sallow, that she was painfully thin. She looked at her own reflection with self-pity, thinking: "I should be handsome still if I had but some flesh and color, and if life were not so hard and disappointing."

She sat a long while, leaning her head on her hand, and seeing, in the mirror, not her own reflection, but the hapless story of her own life passing before her. Then, recalling herself, like a person waking from a dream, she went to the window and looked out upon the quiet street. It was already dusk, and the mist of the late autumn afternoon made mysterious shadows, through which the houses loomed large and near.

Directly before her towered the great stone house, and just above the porte-cochère was a large square window, with delicate lace draperies. It was quite dark enough for the wood fire, sparkling in the white-tiled fireplace, to show the interior of the room, which was evidently a boudoir of the most beautiful and luxurious character. Elizabeth was keen of sight, and she could not refrain from looking into so charming a room placed under her eyes. The walls were paneled with flowered silk; the furniture was of gold and spindle-legged; there was a delicious little sofa drawn up to the



fire; everything spoke of wealth informed by taste. And in a minute more the mistress of this delightful room entered—a graceful, girlish figure, enveloped in a long, full cloak of a shimmering, silvery satin and wearing a flower-decked white hat.

She threw aside her cloak and sat down for a moment on the sofa before the fire. Her air was not that of happy abandon, but rather of thoughtfulness, even of sadness. She was not beautiful, but Elizabeth, with a woman's ready appraisal of another woman's charm, saw at a glance that this girl's appearance was interesting. Her features were delicate, but her face was too pale for beauty; her thin-lipped mouth was large, though redeemed by perfect teeth; but her air, her figure, her walk, were full of grace and elegance. She remained only a few minutes in the room, then passed into the inner room and closed the door after her. And in a moment a maid came in and drew the silk curtains, leaving only a rosy glow from the window instead of a captivating picture.

Elizabeth, distracted for only a little while from her own thoughts, went back to the sad employment of casting up her sorrows and disappointments. She remembered her childhood on the old Virginia plantation with her father's mother. The war was not many years past then, and over all her early life hung that great black shadow of chaos following defeat, the wreck of fortune, the upheaval of society, the helplessness, the despair of millions of people, with their whole social fabric a wreck, all values destroyed, everything disrupted and out of joint. Her father, General Brandon, had been one of the number of ex-Confederates who sought service under the Khedive of Egypt. General Brandon spent ten years in Egypt, and then, the regime of Ismail being over, returned to America. He had stinted himself in every way during his Egyptian service for the benefit of the little dark-eyed girl on the Virginia plantation, and mag-

nanimously invested his savings in Egyptian bonds. He still had the bonds, but as neither interest nor principal had been paid, or was likely to be paid, General Brandon was as poor when he reached America as he had been when he left it.

He was a West Point graduate, and had been the best loved man in his class, in spite of having been also the handsomest and one of the dullest. So when his old classmates in the army heard of his straits they all agreed that "something must be done for Dick Brandon." Although a West Point man, he was not a scientific man; he was too handsome to know much. His old friends did the best they could for him by getting him a clerkship in Washington, and General Brandon, who had commanded a brigade of fighting men during four years of unrelenting warfare, found himself subject to a chief of division young enough to be his son and as ignorant as men are made.

General Brandon bore his lot with a fine patience and a sweet calmness that placed him well up in the ranks of unrecorded heroes. He had a superb courage, a charming temper; he remained incurably handsome, and likewise he was and always remained incurably simple in every way. Anybody could hoodwink him, and most people did. He came to Washington, bringing with him his daughter Elizabeth, then eighteen; and, some remnant of property coming to him, he bought the shabby house, or rather thought he bought it, for it had a heavy mortgage on it, which General Brandon never had the least expectation of lifting—mortgages being as natural to Virginians as sparks flying upward.

Washington, in those days, was a simple, merry, happy-go-lucky place, with a delightful and unique society, based upon official rank and a few old resident families, who were in society when Abigail Adams had the clothes dried in the East Room of the White House.

Elizabeth was a great belle with gay

young army and navy men and sprigs of diplomats and was not unhappy, although she felt at every turn the prick of poverty. She was ashamed to complain, however, in the presence of General Brandon's cheerful submission. He had his compensations, though, chiefly his evening visits to and from other grizzled officers, of both sides, when they sat and talked gravely and tensely of issues as dead as Julius Caesar, and solemnly discussed what might have been, to an accompaniment of whisky and cigars. General Brandon's whisky and cigars were poor—he smoked a pipe himself, declaring he preferred it. But no army man of any rank ever animadverted on the general's whisky or cigars, and although both were evilly cheap they drank and smoked cheerfully, with a relish for the man if not for his entertainment.

General Brandon had no knowledge of the words "getting on in society," or anything like them. He belonged to that sturdy oligarchy in Virginia which, whatever might be its shortcomings, knew nothing of snobs or snobbery, because everybody was just as good as everybody else. But his social career had been such that the newly rich might have asked him his patent for knowing everybody worth knowing.

He was asked everywhere in those days, which he took as a matter of course, just as, during his occasional brief sojourns in England during his Egyptian days, he was asked everywhere and took it as a matter of course. Your true Virginian has many faults and some vices, but he is socially the wisest person in the world because he is the simplest. Nobody can patronize him, nobody can snub him. He takes the notice of royalty with the same unconscious ease that he does the rapturous salutation of a negro barber who belonged to him "befo' de war, sir"—always polite, considerate, mindful of the small, sweet courtesies of life. There is but one section of society with which he cannot get on. This is the newly rich smart set, fresh from

the forge, the shop, the mine, the liquor saloon—that rapid and splendid fungus which has grown up in America during the last forty years, of which it has been said that no parallel exists to its license and irresponsibility, unless one goes back to the later Roman and Byzantine emperors. This class is free with a freedom that is staggering to contemplate; free from any traditions of the past, any responsibility in the present, any accountability to the future; free to marry, to be divorced, to live where it likes, to change its residence every week in the year; free from the care of the few children they have, free from taxes as far as rank perjury goes, and free to command all the science of the world to keep death at bay as long as possible. The advent of this class anywhere changes the aspect of things, and therefore when it moved in columns upon Washington the people of General Brandon's class and Elizabeth's time became "cave-dwellers" and General Brandon was asked "nowhere"; that is, he was still asked, but it was "nowhere." The general, however, didn't know this at the time, or ever afterward.

Meanwhile, before the transformation in Washington was complete, Elizabeth had met her fate at a ball at the British legation, as it was in those days. The man was Captain Jack Darrell, of a crack lancer regiment, the grandson of a peer as poor almost as General Brandon. Darrell was handsome, simple-hearted, brave; was, in short, remarkably like General Brandon in character. After he had danced at a few balls with Elizabeth and had called on her four or five times, he concluded that she was necessary to his happiness and told her so. Elizabeth was swept into his arms by a genuine gust of passion, and they were married almost before they knew it. The giving up of his only child was a hard blow to General Brandon, but he bore it as best he might and dowered Elizabeth with his Egyptian bonds—which was all he had to give her.

So Elizabeth had a very gay, impromptu wedding in Washington and

sailed soon after for India, where her husband's regiment was stationed, and was counted to have made a perfect love match.

But there was another man—only Elizabeth did not find it out until too late. This was the cousin, the chum, the brother officer and the traveling companion of Darrell—Captain Hugh Pelham, a dark, thin, homely man, with more brains in his ugly head than a dozen handsome Darrells could boast.

Elizabeth met the two men at the same time and both fell in love with her; but, as the case often is, the fool rushed in where the wise man feared to tread. The news of Elizabeth's engagement to Darrell came as a bolt out of the blue to Pelham, but he bore his disappointment as a brave and magnanimous man should. He was best man at the wedding, and he and Darrell having the same leave and the same station, he went back to India with the newly married couple and saw Elizabeth every day of his life.

Anglo-Indian life has its dangers, and Pelham, realizing the risks ahead of a woman as young, as beautiful, as innocent and untrained as Elizabeth, with no better guardian than Darrell, was inspired by the deep, silent and disappointed love he bore her to devote himself to her service. He made no resolution of this sort, being what is commonly called an unsentimental man—that is, a man ruled by a sentiment so strong that he does not know it is a sentiment at all; but she was always in his mind and, as far as he could contrive it, within his reach. He was one of those men whose guardianship of a woman is perfectly well understood. He had been called "old Pelham" from the days when he was a sub-lieutenant, and as a captain near his majority he was "old Pelham" still. And Elizabeth, in a very little while, made the painful discovery, which often waits upon marriages, that she had walked over the straight stick and picked up a crooked one. Not that Darrell was ever anything but kind to her and altogether admirable as a husband. But he was dull and

Pelham was clever; he was tactless and Pelham was full of tact; he had no conversation, and Pelham, whenever he spoke, had something to say. And with all this, Pelham had a sinewy strength of character which was a shield and buckler to any woman he loved. It had often occurred to Elizabeth that Pelham deserved the credit for the lofty purity of their relations; for Elizabeth's nature was like an open book to him, and he read therein, within a year of her marriage, that her heart was his—for which neither of the poor souls was to blame. It was the reflection from Pelham's spotless integrity which made Elizabeth scrupulous in her conduct with other men and unvaryingly kind and tender toward her husband. Poor Jack Darrell was too stupid to see, too dull to suspect that Elizabeth's conduct was inspired by duty, not love; and the devotion of the Darrells to each other was a by-word in the regiment. Not a single person suspected that "old Pelham" carried a broken heart around with him or that Elizabeth Darrell, who treated Pelham like a brother, was secretly consumed with love for him.

The Darrells had eight years of the happy-go-lucky existence of young army people with small pay and a smaller allowance. They had one child, which died in infancy and for which Elizabeth grieved as mothers grieve. No more were given her, and she had the added danger of a childless wife, young and beautiful and surrounded by a swarm of subalterns whenever she appeared. But no breath of scandal touched her name, with subalterns any more than with Pelham. There was much talk and chaff between Darrell and Pelham about a mythical fortune which might come to Darrell and, if he had no male heirs, to Pelham. One day, however, the myth proved a fact; the fortune—no very great one—came to Darrell.

Darrell promptly resigned from the army and set up a London establishment. For the first time in her life Elizabeth knew ease and luxury. She had one brilliant year—she could not

call it exactly happy. Pelham was in India still, but Elizabeth was then old enough and strong enough to guide herself. Nevertheless, she was conscious that she was not so good a woman, so good a wife, without Pelham as with him. She was looking for his return when she saw his appointment gazetted to an expedition far into East Africa, which would take him away from civilization for an indefinite time. And at the moment when Pelham was beyond reach of letters or despatches Jack Darrell died after a week's illness.

There is a French school of moralists which says that a man may love two women at once. Elizabeth Darrell certainly loved two men at once. Pelham was always and forever the man she would have married, but Darrell's honest love was not thrown away on her. She mourned him as she had mourned for her child—neither one infringing in the least on Pelham's place in her heart. But she had to lose many other things along with her husband. Every penny of the estate and, as it seemed to Elizabeth, every chair and table was entailed, and the provision for the widow was next to nothing.

With more than the average woman's incapacity for business, Elizabeth was far from realizing the situation to which she was brought. The fact that Pelham was the heir after Darrell, she thought, would make everything easy to her. He had taken the attitude of an elder brother toward her ever since her marriage, and what more natural than that she should depend upon him now? But he neither came nor wrote. Elizabeth was puzzled and troubled at his silence, but tried to explain it by his absence in East Africa, beyond reach of communication. His and Darrell's old regiment was still in India, so she was not much in the way of hearing anything of him by chance. There were persons likely to know something of him, but she shrank from hunting these persons up to ask after a man who had not made the least inquiry about her, although every consideration would induce him to communicate

with her. She had few friends or acquaintances in London, owing to her brief residence there, and none of them knew any more of Pelham's whereabouts than she did.

She remained in London month after month, hoping to hear something from him, giving a reason which served perfectly well to herself, her few acquaintances in London and her father in America—that she was settling up her affairs. She unhappily found herself with a very large affair on her hands which she was quite unable to settle.

The only thing in the way of jewels which Darrell had inherited with the estate was a very handsome diamond and pearl necklace. He had caused it to be reset, and added some fine stones to it, and made a gift of it to Elizabeth only a few days before his death. In her stress for money Elizabeth confided the necklace to a person who called himself a diamond broker, who advanced her five hundred pounds—about a fourth of its value—on it.

As the way is with such sums, it went rapidly, and Elizabeth was terrified at the position in which she found herself. Yet the hope was ever with her that some fine day Pelham would walk in, tell her not to give herself any further anxiety—act, in short, as she had every right to expect him to act. But the months slipped away into a year and more, and still he neither came nor wrote. But his solicitor, a very Scotch person, by the name of Macbean, both came and wrote. He wrote first, inquiring about the necklace, which he said was the property of the estate; and, receiving no answer to his letter, he came to Elizabeth's lodgings and demanded it.

Exasperated by his demands, and ignorant of the legal rights of the matter, Elizabeth received Macbean haughtily and declined to give up the necklace, which, indeed, she neither had nor could get. Some angry words passed, and Macbean uttered a sentence or two which Elizabeth construed to mean that he was in communication with Pelham and was act-



ing strictly under Pelham's instructions. The shock it gave her, the death-like pallor, the trembling which made her unable to speak or stand, would have touched any heart except a solicitor's. But Mr. Macbean, seeing that Pelham's was the name to conjure with, used it remorselessly. It was inevitable that Elizabeth should feel a deep and instant resentment against Pelham, as soon as she convinced herself that he knew of Macbean's course, and condoned, if he did not inspire it. She recovered some of her composure before the interview was over, and said, with great bitterness:

"If Major Pelham thinks my husband did not give me the necklace, and did not buy the best stones in it, let him come to me. I hardly think he will doubt my word to my face." And she swept out of Macbean's presence without listening to his argument that it was not her word, but Darrell's power to give, which was doubted.

Macbean had threatened, if in the meantime the necklace were not forthcoming, to take legal steps within a month; but before the month was over Elizabeth was on her way to America. She had no sense of guilt whatever. She firmly believed the jewels were hers, and fled from Macbean as from a persecutor.

As for Pelham's share in it—well, let him come out in the open, if he wished to fight her. The indignation she cherished toward him by no means lessened the cruel sense of loss she felt in being bereft of his counsel, his forethought, his tenderness, to which she had been so long accustomed. Rather was this indignation increased, because she feared that she had been the victim of her own vanity and Pelham's duplicity ever since she had known him. There was, however, one refuge left her—her father's house; and now she was in that house, in the same room from which she had gone forth a bride; everything about her was unchanged, except herself, and she was changed in soul and spirit—or thought she was.

She had been a wife and a mother, she had suffered a real and lasting passion for a man not her husband, but she had not transgressed a hair's breadth; she had experienced both poverty and wealth, she had known and felt more in her thirty years than most women do in a lifetime; and yet it seemed to her as if she had only turned over, without the opportunity to read and study, those glowing pages in the book of a woman's life—the love of a man, the love of a child, the beauty of the world. Now all was over—even Pelham's love and tender consideration, which had been hers for so long that she scarcely recognized the face of life without them. Nothing was left for her except her father, the best of men and fathers; but this was not enough for a nature like Elizabeth Darrell's.

While these thoughts were passing through Elizabeth's mind darkness had fallen. Lights were twinkling everywhere. The great house opposite radiated brightness from every window, and it occurred to Elizabeth, as to every sorrowful and disappointed person, that everyone in that luxurious and brilliant house must be happy. Probably the girl of the boudoir whose attitude had expressed such dejection was grieving over some trifle, like a disappointment in a dance or the failure of some plan of pleasure.

Then she heard the street door open and a step which she recognized as her father's, and she had the first sensation of gladness she had felt for so long that she had almost forgotten what gladness was.

General Brandon, standing under the flaring gas-jet in the narrow hall, saw the black figure flying down the stairs toward him. He stopped, trembling with emotion; he who had without a tremor faced death a hundred times was shaken at the sight of his child in her mourning garments. The next minute her head was on his shoulder and he was patting it, saying: "My child—my ever dear child—welcome at all times, more welcome in your sorrow——"

Elizabeth looked up, smiling and weeping. It was the first time since her husband's death that she had not seemed in everybody's way.

General Brandon gazed at her, at the changes that ten years had made, at the marks of the recent shipwreck of her hopes and joys, at the pallor and thinness that brooding over her misfortunes had brought upon her, and then he said, with a tremulous smile and with tears in his honest eyes:

"It is doubly sweet to have you back unchanged."

He led her into the dingy, well-remembered drawing-room, and they sat hand in hand on the sofa, talking, Elizabeth dwelling upon her husband's goodness to her, and mentioning none of her woes and perplexities in that first hour of meeting. Then Serena announced dinner, and General Brandon, with the air of escorting a queen regent, placed his daughter at the head of the table.

"And never, since the day of your marriage, my love, have I ever sat down to this table without remembering you and wishing that you were seated at this place," he said.

To Elizabeth it seemed that the place she had in that dull dining-room was the only place she had any right to, except under sufferance, since that June morning, now nearly a year and a half past, when her husband had died.

Not only was General Brandon glad to see her, but Serena seemed equally so. Serena was a distinct acquisition to Elizabeth. When the dinner was fairly begun the general produced a bottle of champagne.

"Provided to celebrate your return, my dearest," he said.

Elizabeth could scarcely drink it for the tears that threatened to overflow.

The dining-room was just as it had been ten years ago, only duller and dingier; but it was scrupulously neat. General Brandon's joy at seeing her was not troubled by any apprehensions as to the shortcomings of his household. All during dinner his spirits did not flag, and insensibly Eliza-

beth's turbulent heart grew more composed. Her father asked her minute particulars of everything concerning her married life, and when Elizabeth told of Darrell's unvarying goodness to her a singular look of relief came into her father's face—he had always had a dim apprehension that Elizabeth was not rightly mated with Darrell—which was true. General Brandon delicately refrained from asking any questions about her means, but Elizabeth told him frankly that the sole provision available for her, after Pelham inherited the property, was about two hundred pounds a year, contingent on her remaining a widow.

"Why, that is opulence!" said General Brandon, with the ideas of opulence of an ex-Confederate officer in a Government clerkship. "That will suffice amply for your needs, and whatever I can supply, my dear, is yours; and I need not say that this house and all in it are at your complete disposal."

Elizabeth rose and went over to him and kissed him. After all, there was some goodness left in the world. She did not once mention Pelham; but presently her father asked:

"And in your trouble, where was Major Pelham, of whom you so often wrote me in years past, as being most kind and brotherly to you? And as he was the next heir, he owed you much consideration."

Elizabeth, by an effort, spoke calmly.

"He was starting for East Africa when Jack died. I have heard nothing from him, but I know, through his solicitor—a very rude person—that Major Pelham has not been to England."

"And Major Pelham has not even written you a letter of condolence?"

"No."

"Most strange. And his solicitor is in communication with him?"

"Yes."

Elizabeth was surprised at the steadiness of her voice in answering these questions, but General Brandon noticed for the first time a tremor in her tones.

"I cannot understand such conduct—and particularly as I retain a most agreeable recollection of Major Pelham—Captain Pelham he was at the time of your marriage."

Then, to Elizabeth's relief, her father left off speaking of Pelham and gave her a minute account of all her Virginia relations and their doings during the last ten years. Elizabeth listened, her head on her hand, the light from the flaring chandelier falling upon her rich hair, one of her beauties left unimpaired. She appeared to be strictly attentive, but in truth she scarcely heard one word of what her father, in his soft, well-bred voice, was saying. Her mind was going over, as it had done many hundreds of times, the strange problem about Pelham. Was it possible that a mere matter of money and an estate had so changed him that he could forget her, after nine years of devotion, silent, it is true, but none the less eloquent? Or was it, after all, mere lip service he had paid her? This she could not quite believe, and so was tormented between longing and regret on one hand and resentment on the other. Pelham at least was a gentleman, and yet he had not observed any sentiment of courtesy or attention to her when he was under every obligation to do so. He must know what sort of man Mr. Macbean was, and yet he had left her completely in Macbean's power. And the remembrance of Macbean brought back the recollection of the money she owed on the necklace of which Macbean was trying to rob her—and she was glad to take refuge from her perplexing and contradictory thoughts by paying more heed to what her father was saying. He had got through with a part of his relations, and with a view of interesting Elizabeth in her future home was telling her something of those friends and acquaintances left in Washington.

"You remember Sara Luttrell, my dear?" asked General Brandon, with a smile. "Well, she is the same Sara Luttrell I danced with forty-five years ago at West Point. Nobody knew her

age then and nobody knows it now—and Time seems to have passed her by. She still lives in her fine old house, gives two dinners a week herself, and goes out to dine the remaining five evenings, and nobody dares cross her except her nephew—her husband's nephew, I should say—Richard Baskerville."

"I think I remember Mr. Baskerville. He was a very agreeable young man when I knew him."

"Richard Baskerville, my dear, is a very remarkable man. He has a comfortable fortune of his own and will inherit every stiver of Sara Luttrell's money. But he works hard at his profession of the law and has made a name for himself. His fortune and position make it possible for him to devote himself to civics, and he is frequently engaged in the investigations of violations of the civil service law and in matters coming before Congress in which there is reason to suspect fraud. Just now he is in the thick of a fight with my neighbor in the fine house across the way—Senator Clavering—who is under fire at the present time before a senatorial committee concerning some alleged gigantic frauds with railway land grants in the Far West. I knew Clavering well before the war, when I was a captain of infantry and he was a sutler—post traders they now call themselves, and I understand their daughters aspire to be visited by the young officers."

So the big, beautiful house belonged to this man Clavering! Elizabeth felt an immediate and strange interest on hearing about the people who lived in that charming abode. She wondered why she should wish to hear more of these people whose names she had heard only at that moment, but nevertheless she did.

Nothing pleased General Brandon so much as to talk of things which happened before the war except to talk about those which happened during the war.

"Clavering, however, was not the man to remain a sutler very long. He made money at the business—they all

do; Napoleon Bonaparte was the only man who knew how to treat a man supplying soldiers. In the days when I knew Clavering a sutler was a sutler; nevertheless, Clavering was such a remarkable man that no one who knew him could forget him. I used often to talk with him, and he professed to be under some obligations to me for certain small acts of kindness. After giving up the post tradership for something better I heard of him at intervals—sometimes he was up and sometimes he was down. Then he went into mining, prospecting and land buying on a great scale and developed, what I had always observed in him, a remarkable capacity for men and affairs. Five years ago he came to the Senate, built this splendid house you saw on the corner and set up for a statesman and a gentleman. Ha! ha! I must say, however, that he had some qualifications for both. His family are conspicuous socially—he has three daughters and a son. The son is a worthy young man and very pious; he goes to St. Bartholomew's Chapel, where I attend service, as I did when I had the joy of having you with me, my child."

The general was a strict churchman, and it was no small recommendation that Clavering had a son who was also a strict churchman.

"And one of Clavering's daughters—Miss Anne Clavering—is very much admired and respected. Another of his daughters has had the misfortune to be divorced. His wife is little seen in society. She was a plain but most excellent woman when I knew her thirty years ago. This investigation, of which Richard Baskerville is one of the leading spirits, must be extremely painful to the ladies of Clavering's family."

General Brandon prattled on until ten o'clock came, when he always went to his modest club for an hour. He escorted Elizabeth to her door and said good night, giving her a blessing like the patriarchs of old.

As soon as she was alone Elizabeth put out the gas and, opening the window, looked out upon the night.

It was a damp and chilly night, with a few vagrant stars in the sky and a sickly moon setting. The vast mass of foliage which makes Washington a great park still hung upon the trees, but was yellowing and decaying. There were not many lights in the houses round about, except in the Clavering mansion, for it was not yet the full season in Washington. But while Elizabeth was looking a carriage drove under the Clavering porte-cochère, an alert footman opened the huge street door and spread a carpet down the steps. In a moment the girl Elizabeth had seen in the boudoir came out in an evening costume, with a white silk mantle enveloping her. Elizabeth had a perfectly clear view of her as she passed down the steps under a great, swinging lantern. She was not beautiful, but interesting, graceful and with an air of perfect breeding. After her came one of the handsomest men Elizabeth had ever seen. He was well past middle age, but his figure was noble, his features without line or wrinkle, his complexion ruddy with health and his close-cropped iron-gray hair abundant. Elizabeth divined that it was Clavering and one of his daughters, for, although the girl had by no means the beauty of the man, there was sufficient likeness to show that they were father and daughter.

Elizabeth watched them with singular interest as the carriage rolled off. She had never expected to feel an interest in anything again, and that which she felt in these strange people seemed ominous. For Elizabeth, being a woman, was superstitious.

## II

SARA LUTTRELL, as General Brandon called her, was sitting in her fine old-fashioned drawing-room, enjoying her invariable Saturday evening gossip with her nephew-in-law, Richard Baskerville, preparatory to her invariable Saturday evening dinner. This Saturday dinner was as much of an institution with Mrs. Luttrell as her



ermine cape or her free-spoken tongue, all of them being Medic and Persian in nature. Nobody knew how many decades this Saturday evening dinner had been established, just as nobody knew Mrs. Luttrell's age, except that it was somewhere between sixty and ninety. This dinner, which no more than six persons attended, took place at the unfashionable hour of seven. But seven had been the fashionable hour when Mrs. Luttrell began her Saturday dinners, and although she conceded much to the new fashions introduced by the smart set—more, indeed, than she ever admitted—and had advanced her formal dinner hour to half-after eight, yet she clung to seven for this Saturday evening institution. No other dinner invitation could lure Mrs. Luttrell from her own table on Saturday evenings, and it was one of the incidents of the warfare which had once raged between her and the lady of the White House that Mrs. Luttrell should have been asked to dine at the White House on a Saturday evening. Mrs. Luttrell, however, came off triumphant. She could not have her own dinner that night, but in the very nick of time she heard of the death of a seventeenth cousin in Maryland. Mrs. Luttrell immediately asked to be excused from the White House on the ground of the death of a relative, and clapped herself, her coachman and footman in mourning for a seventeenth cousin she had not seen in thirty years and had always cordially detested. To be in ignorance of the sacredness of Mrs. Luttrell's Saturday evenings was a crime of grave magnitude in her eyes, and to respect her rights on Saturday was to take a toboggan slide into her favor. It was the law that Richard Baskerville should dine with her on Saturday, and although that young man maintained a perfect independence toward her in every other respect, in spite of the fact that she had made a will giving him every stiver of her fortune, he was careful to reserve his Saturday evenings for her.

The old lady and the young man sat

opposite each other before a glowing wood fire in the great drawing-room. Mrs. Luttrell was a small, high-bred, handsome woman, with snow-white hair, perfect teeth, a charming smile, a reckless tongue and a fixed determination to have her own way twenty-four hours out of the day and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, with an additional day thrown in at leap-year. Time had left a few external marks upon her, but in essentials she was the same woman General Brandon had danced with forty-five years before. She was in love with the same man, who even then was in his early grave—Richard Luttrell, the husband of her youth. He had been dead unnumbered years, and only one person on earth—his nephew, Richard Baskerville—suspected that Mrs. Luttrell cherished her husband's memory with a smoldering and silent passion—the only thing she was ever known to be silent about in her life.

Mrs. Luttrell sat bolt upright, after the ancient fashion, in her carved ebony chair, while Richard Baskerville lounged at his ease on the other side of the marble mantel. He was a well-made man of thirty-five, without any particular merit in the way of beauty; but so clear of eye, so clean cut of feature, so expressive of a man's intelligence and a man's courage that people forgot to ask whether he was handsome or not. Mrs. Luttrell always stoutly maintained that he was very handsome, but found few to agree with her. Her belief came, however, from his resemblance to the miniature of her husband which she kept in her capacious pocket—for she still insisted on pockets in her gowns, and this miniature never left her by day or night.

Mrs. Luttrell's drawing-room was the admiration and the despair of people who knew something about drawing-rooms. It might have been taken bodily from the Second French Empire, of which Mrs. Luttrell had seen a good deal, for she had known the Third Napoleon well at some indefinite period in her history. The room was large

and square and high pitched, and wholly innocent of bay-windows, cozy corners and such architectural fallals. The ceiling was heavily ornamented with plaster in the Italian style, and the cornice was superb. Over the fireplace was a great white marble mantel with a huge mirror above it, and in one corner of the room a grand piano, something under a hundred years old, looked like a belle in hoopskirts. There was a wealth of old rosewood furniture, pictures, candelabra, girandoles, Dresden ornaments and other beautiful old things which would have made a collector turn green with envy.

Mrs. Luttrell was vain about her drawing-room, and with reason. She proudly claimed that there was not a single technical antique in it, and frequently declared she could tell the age of any family by a glance at their drawing-room. The newer the family the more antique the furniture, and when a family was absolutely new their house was furnished with antiques, and nothing but antiques, from top to bottom.

Mrs. Luttrell was gossiping hard as she sat before her drawing-room fire, shading her eyes from the leaping blaze with an old-fashioned fan and waiting for her guests to arrive. When Mrs. Luttrell gossiped she was happy. One of the compensations to her for the new dispensation in Washington society was that it gave her plenty to gossip about. Ever since the advent in Washington society of pickles, dry-goods, patent medicines, shoes, whisky, and all the other brands of honest trade she had been engaged in a hand-to-hand fight to maintain her prestige as a leading hostess of Washington, against the swarms of newcomers, whose vast fortunes made Mrs. Luttrell's hitherto ample income seem like genteel poverty. The rest of the "cave-dwellers," as the original society of Washington is now called, had never made any fight at all. They regarded the new influx with haughty disdain in the first instance, laughed at their *gaucheries*, and spoke of them pityingly as, "Poor Mrs. So-and-so,"

"Those queer persons from nobody knows where." The first accurate knowledge, however, that came to them of the "smart set," as the new people are called, was when the cave-dwellers were seized by the backs of their necks and were thrown over the ramparts of society, leaving the smart set in possession of the citadel.

Mrs. Luttrell, however, was not so easily disposed of as the rest. She saw that the Chinese policy of ignoring the enemy and representing a total rout as a brilliant victory would never do; so she set about holding her own with intelligence as well as courage. She called upon the new people, invited to her house those she liked, and Baskerville, who was the only living person who dared to contradict her, declared that Mrs. Luttrell never was known to decline an invitation to dine with any form of honest trade, no matter how newly emancipated. Her strongest weapon was, however, the capacity she had always possessed of bringing men about her. She was one of those men's women whom age cannot wither nor custom stale. Her *esprit*, her knowledge of how to make men comfortable in mind and body when in her house, her insidious flattery, which usually took the form of delicate rail-lery, had charmed successive generations of men. Her kingdom had been long established, and she knew how to reign.

In her early widowhood she had been much pestered with offers of marriage, but it had not taken many years to convince her world that she would die Sara Luttrell. Every cause except the right one was given for this, for of all women Mrs. Luttrell was the last one to be suspected of a sentiment so profound as the lifelong mourning for a lost love.

But it was perhaps just this touch of passionate regret, this fidelity to an ideal, which constituted half her charm to men. At an age when most women are content to sink into grandmotherhood Mrs. Luttrell was surrounded by men of all ages in a manner to make a debutante envious. Other

hostesses might have to rack their brains for dinner men; Mrs. Luttrell was always embarrassed with riches in this respect. An afternoon visit at her house meant finding a dozen desirable men whom hospitable hostesses languished for in vain. Even a tea, that function dreaded of women because it means two women to one man, became in Mrs. Luttrell's splendid, old-fashioned drawing-room a company in which the masculine element exactly balanced the feminine. She could have made the fortune of a debutante, and hence ambitious mothers sought her favor. Mrs. Luttrell, however, never had made a debutante's fortune and never intended to, holding that the power to grant a favor is more respected than the favor itself.

Then, too, it was well known that Richard Baskerville, one of the most desirable and agreeable men in Washington, was always to be found at her house, and was certain to inherit her fortune; and he had the ability, the wit and the grace to be an attraction in himself. The old lady would have liked it well if Baskerville had consented to live in a suite of the big, unused rooms in the house, but this he would not do. He agreed as a compromise, however, to buy a small house back of Mrs. Luttrell's, and by using an entrance in her large, old-fashioned garden it was almost as if he were in the same house.

Mrs. Luttrell followed the new customs and fashions so far as she thought judicious, and no farther. She knew the power of old customs and fashions when properly used. She held to her big landau, with her long-tailed black horses and her portly negro coachman and footman, because it gave her opportunities to intimidate the newly rich while apparently apologizing for her antique equipage.

"My carriage and horses and servants haven't varied much for forty years, and I can't change now. It's all very well for you people who are accustomed to sudden changes to have your smart broughams and victorias,

and your pink and white English coachmen and footmen, but it would look perfectly ridiculous in Sara Luttrell, don't you see?"

This to some aspiring newcomers whose equipage had been in a steady process of evolution from the time that a buggy was a luxury until now every season saw a complete revolution in their stables. Or,

"I know my ermine cape looks as if it was made in Queen Elizabeth's time, but I can't afford to throw it away; and, Lord bless you, what does it matter whether one is in the fashion or not?"

This to a lady who knew that her whole social existence depended upon her being in fashion.

It was insolent, of course, but Mrs. Luttrell meant to be insolent, and was so successfully, smiling meanwhile her youthful smile, showing her perfect teeth and certain of an answering smile from the men who were always at her elbow. Her whole world then thought she defied and laughed at the smart set, but Richard Baskerville saw, and had the assurance to tell her, that she secretly liked them very much, and even sought their countenance by unique means.

"Well," said Mrs. Luttrell, settling herself and adjusting the immortal ermine cape around her lace-covered shoulders, "I have a surprise in store for you tonight. Who do you think is to dine here?"

"Myself number one—Senator and Mrs. Thorndyke and Judge Woodford. I believe you are in love with that man, Sara Luttrell."

This calling her by her first name Mrs. Luttrell reckoned a charming piece of impudence on Richard Baskerville's part, and in saying it his smile was so pleasant, his voice so agreeable, his manner so arch that he conveyed extreme flattery by it.

"No, my dear boy, you are mistaken in that particular. But I have a surprise in store for you."

A pause.

"Why don't you ask me who it is?"

"Because you'll tell me within two minutes if I just let you alone."

"It is—Anne Clavering."

Richard Baskerville sat up quickly. Surprise and pleasure shone in his face.

"Why, Sara! I didn't think you could do anything as decent as that."

"I don't know why. I've always liked the girl. And I believe you are about half in love with her."

"You are such a suspicious old woman! But considering the share I am taking on the part of the original mortgagees in those K. F. R. land grants, which may land Senator Clavering in State's prison, I feel some delicacy in paying any attention to his daughter."

"Naturally, I should think. But you were deep in the land-grant lawsuits before you ever met Anne Clavering."

"Yes, that's true. She once asked me to call, but I never felt I could do so under the circumstances, though Clavering himself, who is a pachyderm, so far as the ordinary feelings of mankind go, is as chummy as you please with me whenever we meet. And he actually invited me to visit his house! Miss Clavering probably knew nothing of the specific reason that keeps me away, but Clavering does, you may be sure. I have met Miss Clavering everywhere, and every time I see her I am lost in wonder as to how she came to be Senator Clavering's daughter or the sister of Mrs. Denman and that youngest daughter, Lydia."

"A couple of painted Jezebels, that are enough to drag any family to perdition. The old woman, I hear, murders the king's English and eats with her knife, but is a good soul. And if it wasn't for the determined stand Anne Clavering has taken for her mother I don't imagine there is much doubt that Senator Clavering would have divorced her long ago. But Anne stands up for her mother, makes them all treat her tolerably, and is assisted by the brother—a poor rag of a man, but perfectly respectable—Reginald Clavering. Did you ever notice how common people run to high-flown names? None of our plain Johns and

Georges and Marys and Susans and Janes for them—they get their names, I think, out of Ouida's novels."

Richard Baskerville rose and stood in front of the fire. Mrs. Luttrell could not complain of any want of interest on his part in the subject under discussion.

"Miss Clavering, as I told you, invited me to call on her when I first met her. However, I had scruples about going to the house of a man I was fighting as I am fighting Senator Clavering, so I never went, and she never repeated the invitation. She is a very proud woman."

"Very. And she is the only one of her class I have ever seen who was really a scientific fighter."

"How pitiable it is, though, for a girl to have to fight her way through society!"

"Yes—but Anne Clavering does it, and does it gallantly. Nobody can be impertinent to her with impunity. Do you know, the first thing that made me like her was the way she hit back when I gave her a gentle correction."

"I am delighted to hear it, and I hope she whipped you well."

"Not exactly—but she stood up before me long enough to make me respect her and ask her to one of my little Saturday dinners."

"Mrs. Thorndyke is always asking her to dinner, and I know of no woman more discerning than Mrs. Thorndyke."

"Yes. Constance Thorndyke knows a great deal. But, you see, her husband is in the Senate and so she has to have some sorts of people at her house that I don't have. However, I know she is really a friend of Anne Clavering, and it is perfectly plain that, although Miss Clavering is a *nouveau riche* herself, she hasn't an overwhelming respect for her own 'Order,' as Ouida would say. She is ten times more flattered to be entertained by people like the Thorndykes and myself than by the richest pork-packing or dry-goods family in Washington."

"Certainly she is, as a woman of sense would be."

"As for that divorcée, Élise Den-



man, and that younger girl, Lydia, they are the two greatest scamps, as they are the two handsomest women, in this town. They are not deficient in their own peculiar sort of sense and courage, and they have whipped the Brentwood-Baldwins handsomely about that pew in St. John's Church. The religion of these brand-new people is the most diverting thing about them, next to their morals!"

"They also are the sons of God," replied Baskerville, quoting.

"Don't believe that for a moment! Most of 'em are the sons and daughters of Satan, and nobody else. If ever the Episcopal Church—the Anglican Church, they call it—comes out squarely against divorce I don't know where it will land the smart set or what they'll do for a religion. They will have to become esoteric Buddhists or something of the sort. At present a pew in a fashionable church is the very first round on the social ladder. I have gone to St. John's all my life, and my father was one of the original pew-holders, but I declare, if I could find a well-warmed Episcopal church in southeast Washington, or Anacostia even, I'd go to it."

"No, you wouldn't."

"Yes, I would. I don't know how the dispute with the Brentwood-Baldwins came about, but there was a pew near the President's which both the Claverings and the Brentwood-Baldwins wanted, and those two pagan daughters of Senator Clavering got it. You ought to have seen the Brentwood-Baldwin girl and those other two girls pass each other last Sunday morning coming out of church; they exchanged looks which were equivalent to a slap in the face."

"And you wouldn't have missed seeing it for worlds."

"Why, it's true I like to see a fight."

"For pure love of fighting I never saw your equal, Sara Luttrell."

"I come by it honestly. I am of as good fighting stock as you are, Richard Baskerville. But the Clavering-Brentwood-Baldwin row is not the only

religious war in this town. You know Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner—I know her husband was originally Jim Skinner before he went to glory."

"Now, who told you that?"

"Oh, nobody. I just felt it in my bones. Well, Mrs. Skinner has a new and original fad—that woman is clever! She has seen the automobile fad, and the fancy-ball fad, and the monkey-dinner fad, and the dining-on-board-the-emperor's-yacht fad, and the exclusive-school fad, and the exclusive-theatrical-performance fad. She has done horse shows and yacht races and dinners-to-the-ambassador, and now she has outfooted New York and Newport and left Chicago at the post. She has a private chapel and she's going to have a private chaplain!"

"Oh, Lord, you dreamed it!"

"No, I didn't, Richard, my dear. You see, the Jim Skinners"—Mrs. Luttrell pronounced it as if it were "jim-skinners"—"were originally honest Methodists, but these people shed their religion along with their old clothes and plated forks. And now Mrs. Jim-skinner has become Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner and an ardent Episcopalian, and so has Gladys Jim-skinner, and Gwendolen Jimskinner, and Lionel Jimskinner, and Harold Jimskinner, and I believe that woman has set her heart on having what she calls an Anglican archbishop in these United States."

"If she has I know it is you who put the microbe in her head."

It was a chance shot, but it hit the white.

"I think I did, Richard," meekly replied Mrs. Luttrell. "Mrs. Jim-skinner—I mean Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner—was urging me to join the Order of St. Monica; that's an order in which widows pledge themselves not to get married again. I told her there wasn't the least reason for me to join, for, although I've never told my age to any living person, I hardly consider myself on the matrimonial list any longer. And then Mrs. Van Cortlandt Skinner told me of the various beautiful brand-new orders in the church, and

said she thought of getting an order founded for one of her boys; the other one would have to marry and perpetuate the family. And I suggested a contemplative order with a nice name, like the Order of St. Werewolf. She rather liked the notion, and said she would build a beautiful monastery on her estate on the Hudson, and whichever one of her boys she decided to indulge in a life of celibacy she would have made the first superior. And then I said—now, Richard, don't be rude—I said how much simpler all these delightful things would be if we only had an archbishop like the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mrs. Van Cortlandt Skinner said she had always thought that and had often longed for an archbishop, and the development of the church required one; and then I caught Senator Thorndyke's eye—we were coming out of church—and I ran away."

"You wicked old woman! What will you do next?"

"I haven't done anything. You see, Mrs. Jimskinner belongs to that class who don't see any reason why they shouldn't have anything they happen to fancy. If they get married and don't like it, they get a divorce and a new husband or wife as they get a new butler when they discharge the one they have. If they want a title, they go and buy one. If they want a crest, they simply take one. They can't understand why they shouldn't do anything or have anything they want. I declare, Mrs. Jimskinner was talking to me with the simplicity of a child, and she's as bent on that private chaplain and that archbishop as if each was the latest style of automobile. I don't wonder the London newspapers guy Americans, remembering what kind of Americans find their way into London society."

"That reminds me—I met General Brandon two days ago, and his daughter, Mrs. Darrell."

"Yes, Elizabeth Darrell has come back, as poor as a church-mouse, I hear, and with most of her beauty gone. I shall call to see her. She will find

a very different Washington from the one she left ten years ago."

"Miss Clavering," announced the negro butler.

Anne Clavering, graceful and self-possessed, entered the room. She had not the sumptuous beauty of her sisters nor remarkable beauty at all, yet, as Elizabeth Darrell had seen in that first accidental view of her, she was more than beautiful—she was interesting. She had no marks of race, but she had every mark of refinement. Her gown was simple, but exquisite, and she wore no jewels. Mrs. Luttrell received her amiably and even affectionately, and her quick eye noted that both Anne and Baskerville blushed at meeting.

"So you are not above coming out to an unfashionable dinner with an old fogy," she said, taking Anne's hand.

"I believe it is considered one of the great privileges of Washington to dine with you at one of your 'unfashionable dinners,'" Anne replied, with her pleasant smile. This made Anne's fortune with Mrs. Luttrell.

In a minute or two more Senator and Mrs. Thorndyke were announced, and they were promptly followed by Judge Woodford, a handsome, antique gentleman, who had for forty years counted on being one day established as the head of Mrs. Luttrell's fine house.

The Thorndykes were not a young couple, although they had not been long married. Their love affair had covered a long period of separation and estrangement, and at last, when Fate had relented and had brought them together in their maturity, it gave them by way of recompense a depth of peace, of confidence of quiet happiness, and a height of thrilling joy at coming into their own inheritance of love, that made for them a heaven upon earth.

Thorndyke, a high-bred, scholarly man of the best type of New England, hid under a cool exterior an ardent and devoted nature. Constance Thorndyke was exteriorly the scin-

tillant, magnetic Southern woman, but inwardly she was as strong and as sustaining as Thorndyke himself. Neither of them had a grain of mawkish sentimentality, and they were always differing playfully when they really differed seriously; but they never differed in their love and admiration of what was good.

Baskerville took Anne out to dinner. He had several times had that good fortune, especially in Mrs. Thorndyke's house, and so far as dinner companions went he and Anne were well acquainted. Anne had been deeply mortified at Baskerville's ignoring her invitation to call, and the reason she at once suspected—his knowledge of her father's character and his share of furnishing information to the senatorial committee which was investigating Senator Clavering. She did not for one moment suspect that Baskerville put compulsion on himself to keep away from her house. She was conscious of a keen pleasure in his society, and a part of the gratification she felt at being asked to one of Mrs. Luttrell's intimate dinners was that Baskerville should know how Mrs. Luttrell esteemed her.

The dinner fulfilled all of Anne's expectations. The Thorndykes were socially accomplished, and Judge Woodford had been a professional diner-out since the days when President Buchanan had made him a third secretary of legation at Paris. Anne Clavering found herself adopted into the small circle, so different in birth and rearing from her own, by the freemasonry of good sense and good manners—in which she, however, was the equal of anybody.

Mrs. Luttrell shone at her own table, and the restraint she put upon her tongue revealed her to be, when she chose, a person of perfect tact. And, indeed, her most outrageous speeches were matters of calculation, and were in themselves a species of tact. When entertaining guests in her own house, however, she showed only the amiable side of her nature, and she was always amiable to Richard Baskerville,

the one human being in the world whom she really loved and feared. Anne was extremely amused at the attitude of Baskerville to Mrs. Luttrell, shown by such things as calling her by her first name and hectoring over her affectionately; all of which Mrs. Luttrell took meekly, only prophesying that if he ever married he would make an intolerable husband.

Anne Clavering noted that among these people of old and fixed position there was a great deal of chaff, while among the new people there was always great formality. The manners of the one set were simple, and of the latter elaborate. She also saw, being of a quick eye, that there were many differences in little things between the old and the new. The new had a different and complex fork for every course; but Mrs. Luttrell had, except some very old-fashioned oyster forks, the same handsome, plain old forks which had been in use in her family since silver forks were first adopted. There was no opportunity, if she had wished, to emulate a brand-new Washington hostess, who mentioned to a distinguished guest that he was eating his fish with the wrong fork. And Mrs. Luttrell had the temerity to have on the table her splendid old decanters in which was served the very last old port in Washington, "laid down by papa in '67."

When the dinner was over they closed around the drawing-room fire, and talked cozily, as people can seldom talk in the hurrying, rushing twentieth century; and then Mrs. Thorndyke, at Mrs. Luttrell's request, went to the grand piano and sang sweetly some songs as old-fashioned as the piano. Anne remembered with a blush the professional singers who were considered essential to the Clavering house after one of the large, magnificent and uncomfortable dinners which were a burden and an anxiety to all of the Clavering family.

When the carriages were announced everybody was surprised at the lateness of the hour. Anne went up to Mrs. Luttrell and thanked her sincerely and prettily for one of the pleasantest

evenings she had ever spent in Washington. Mrs. Luttrell, who declared herself totally indifferent to blame or praise from one of the new people, was hugely flattered by this expression from a Clavering.

Baskerville, having antique manners, put Anne in her carriage, and contrived to express in this small action a part of the admiration and homage he felt for her. Anne, driving home in the November night, experienced a strong and sudden revulsion of feeling from the quiet enjoyment of the evening. Bitterness overwhelmed her.

"How much happier and better off are those people than I and all my kind!" she thought. "They have no struggles to make, no slights to swallow or avenge, no social mortifications, nothing to hide, to fear or to be ashamed of, while I——"

She buried her face in her hands as she leaned back in the carriage, and wept at the cruel thought that Baskerville would not come to her house because he did not think her father a decent man. And as she entered her own street she caught sight of Count Rosalka, a young attaché, helping Élise Denman out of a cab at the corner. Élise ran along the street and under the port-cochère as Anne got out of the carriage and walked up the steps. Élise's eyes were dancing, her mouth smiling; she looked like a bacchante.

"Remember," she said, catching Anne by the arms, "I've been out to dinner, too."

The door was opened, not by one of the gorgeous footmen, but by Lydia, handsomer, younger and wickeder-looking than Élise.

"Good for you, Lyd," whispered Élise; "I'll do as well by you some time."

The footman then appeared, and grinned openly when Lydia remarked that as she was passing through the hall she recognized Miss Clavering's ring and opened the door.

Anne went upstairs, her heart sick within her. As she passed her mother's door she stopped, and a tremulous voice within called her. She entered

and sat awhile on her mother's elaborate, lace-trimmed bed. Mrs. Clavering, a homely, elderly woman, looked not less homely and elderly because of her surroundings. But not all the splendor of her lace and satin bed could eclipse the genuine goodness, the meekness, the gentleness in her plain and patient face. She listened eagerly to Anne's description of the dinner, which was cheerful enough, albeit her heart misgave her cruelly about Élise and Lydia.

When she had finished speaking Mrs. Clavering said, patting Anne's head with a kind of furtive affection:

"I think you know real nice, well-behaved people, my dear, and I wish the other girls"—"gurls" she called them—"were like you."

At that moment Baskerville and Senator Thorndyke were sitting in Baskerville's library, discussing a bottle of prime old whisky and looking at some books from a late auction. Mrs. Thorndyke had driven home, and Senator Thorndyke, preferring to walk, was spending an hour meanwhile in masculine talk unrestrained by the presence of the ladies. The two men were intimate, an intimacy which had originated when Baskerville was a college senior and Thorndyke was on the committee of their Greek letter society. There was a strong sympathy between them, although Thorndyke was a New Englander of New Englanders, and Baskerville a Virginian of Virginians. Both were lawyers of the old-time, legal-politico sort, both of them scholarly men, both of them independent of popular favor, and both of them, while preaching the purest democracy, were natural aristocrats. They belonged to opposite political parties, but that rather added a zest to their friendship. The library in Baskerville's house, across the garden from Mrs. Luttrell's, was in the second story and extended the full width of the house. It was essentially a bachelor's working library, plain, comfortable, well warmed and lighted, and with an engaging touch of shabbiness. A big leather-covered table was in the mid-



dle of the room, and under the green light from a student lamp were displayed the books, the whisky, the water and the glasses. Baskerville's mind was not, however, on the books he was showing, but on Anne Clavering, and incidentally on Senator Clavering.

"How do you account for Miss Clavering being the daughter of Senator Clavering?" he asked Thorndyke, as they pulled at their cigars.

"Those things can't be accounted for, although one sees such strange dissimilarities in families, everywhere and all the time. Miss Clavering is, no doubt, a case of atavism. Somewhere, two or three generations back, there was a strain of refinement and worth in her family, and she inherits from it. But I see something in her of Clavering's good qualities—because he has some good qualities—courage, for example."

"Courage—I should think so. Why, the way that man has fought the courts shows the most amazing courage. He is a born litigant, and it is extraordinary how he has managed to use the law to crush his opponents and has escaped being crushed himself. And in trying to follow his turnings and windings in this K. F. R. swindle it is astounding to see how he has contested every step of an illegal transaction until he has got everybody muddled—lawyers, State and Federal courts, and the whole kit of them. As fast as one injunction was vacated he would take out another. He seems to have brought a separate and distinct lawsuit for every right in every species of property he ever possessed at any time—land, mines, railways and corporations. He has pocketed untold millions and has invoked the law to protect him when ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have been fugitives from justice. He is the most difficult scoundrel to catch I ever met—but we will catch him yet."

"I think you are hot on his trail in the K. F. R. matter," replied Thorndyke. "I believe myself that when the great exposé is made before the investigating committee it will recom-

mend his expulsion from the Senate, and three-fourths of the senators will support the committee. The Legislature is safe, so the party won't lose a seat; and in any event I don't believe we can afford to hold on to a man like Clavering after the country knows about him, especially with a Presidential campaign coming on within the year. I think, with all his talents, he would not be fitted for public life if he were as honest as he is dishonest. He has no idea, after all his litigation, of sound legal principles, and he is fully persuaded that any man, any court, any Legislature may be bought, and a more dangerous fallacy doesn't exist for a public man than that. He has never submitted to party discipline and has played politics with every party that has ever made a showing in his State. For all his money, he has never been a contributor to party funds; so I think, making due allowance for the weakness of human nature, that a horrible example will be made of Clavering, and we shall thereby deprive you of an effective party cry in the campaign. You are really doing us a service by your course, because without your unraveling the legal tangle I doubt if anything could have been made out of the K. F. R. frauds. I have no sympathy to waste on Clavering or any of his family that I know of, except Miss Clavering. It will go hard with her."

Baskerville's tanned complexion grew a little pale, and he sat silent for some moments; so silent that Thorndyke began to suspect Mrs. Thorndyke's idea was the right one after all—Baskerville was in love with Anne Clavering. Thorndyke had laughed at it as a woman's fancy, saying to her that a woman couldn't see a man pick up a girl's handkerchief without constructing a matrimonial project on the basis of it; but Constance Thorndyke had stoutly maintained her opinion that Baskerville was in love with Anne Clavering. His attitude now certainly indicated a very strong interest in her, especially when he said, after a considerable pause:

"If I had known Miss Clavering before this K. R. R. matter was started perhaps I shouldn't have gone into it. There is something very painful, you must know, Thorndyke, in dealing a blow at a woman—and a woman like Miss Clavering. By heaven, for all the luxury she lives in and all the respect and admiration she commands, there is not a woman in Washington whom I pity more!"

Thorndyke had been turning over the leaves of a beautiful Apuleius, which was one of the treasures Baskerville was exhibiting to him. He opened the volume at the fifth metamorphosis and read out of it a single phrase which made Baskerville's face gain color.

"The bold boy of evil ways.' There's nothing in all those old Greek literary fellows which excels this in humor—although what there is humorous in modern love I can't see. It's the most tragic thing in life, and if it is genuine it draws blood every time."

Thorndyke had reason to say this. He had spent the eighteen best years of his life solitary and ill at ease because of a woman's love and another woman's spite, and not all the happiness of married life could ever make either him or Constance Thorndyke forget their starved hearts in those eighteen years of estrangement and separation.

But as normal men deal with sentimentalities in a direct and simple manner, Thorndyke added, after a minute:

"Miss Clavering ought to marry. If she could be cut loose from Clavering himself and those two handsome and outrageous sisters of hers it would be an unmixed blessing. But with all Miss Clavering's merit and charms that family of hers will always be a handicap with a man of the sort she would be likely to marry."

"Not if he really loved her, Thorndyke."

Senator Thorndyke smoked on in silence.

"And," continued Baskerville, "her mother is a most worthy woman, if uneducated; and although Reginald Clavering is a great fool, I believe he

is a thoroughly upright man and even a gentleman. So you see it is not wholly a family of degenerates."

Thorndyke, seeing which way the tide was setting, remarked with perfect sincerity:

"Miss Clavering is worthy of any man; and I say so not only on my own judgment, but on my wife's."

"Sanest, soundest woman in Washington—except Miss Clavering herself," was Baskerville's reply to this.

When Senator Thorndyke reached home an hour afterward he roused his wife to tell her that he believed Baskerville was in love with Anne Clavering, after all.

"And has been ever since he knew her; but men are so dense, he didn't know it himself—much less did you know it until it became as obvious as the Washington Monument," was Mrs. Thorndyke's wifely reply.

### III

THE next day was a bright November Sunday, and after an early luncheon Baskerville started out for a walk into the country. Anne Clavering was much in his mind, and he was beginning to debate with himself in this wise: if Senator Clavering had no delicacy about inviting him to call, why should he be too delicate-minded to go? Which proves that Baskerville was in love with Anne Clavering, or he would have said that for him to go to a man's house in the circumstances in which he would enter Senator Clavering's was an outrageous breach of propriety.

When he got well out of the town he met the scanty congregation of a small Episcopal chapel in the suburbs. Among those strolling homeward he speedily recognized General Brandon and Elizabeth Darrell—and with them Reginald Clavering.

This only son of Senator Clavering's was no more like him than Anne was, and, indeed, very much resembled Anne, except that he had neither her intelligence nor her grace. He had a

good and affectionate heart and in a foolish, blundering way was both an honest man and a gentleman. His life, however, was given over to small and futile things, and even his piety, which was genuine, embodied a childish worship of ecclesiastical trifles. He was the mainstay, chief financial backer and clerical man-of-all-work in the little chapel, while his sisters, Élise and Lydia, fought with the Brentwood-Baldwins at St. John's, and Anne, after going to an early morning service at the nearest church, devoted the rest of her Sunday to her mother.

Baskerville stopped and spoke with great cordiality to the party. He had known Elizabeth Darrell well in her girlhood, and there was a remote, seventeenth-cousin, Maryland-Virginia connection between the Baskervilles and the Brandons. His first glance at her in her mourning costume showed him that she had suffered much, and her beauty was partially eclipsed. She had gained interest, however, as the case often is, by learning the hard lessons of life, and Baskerville saw that she might regain all and more of her good looks with returning flesh and color, and a loss of the wearied and forlorn expression in her still glorious dark eyes. He asked permission to call upon her, and Elizabeth assented with outward grace and cheerfulness; but, in truth, it mattered little to her then whether she ever saw anyone again, except her father, and—humiliating thought!—Pelham, once more. For, angry as she was with Pelham, the thought of ever again meeting him was profoundly agitating to her. She inquired of Baskerville about Mrs. Luttrell, and sent her a kind message; then they parted and went upon their several ways.

Half an hour afterward, when Elizabeth Darrell was nearing her own door, she attracted the attention of Senator Clavering, who, sitting at his library window, caught sight of her graceful black figure as she stopped with her father and talked a few minutes with Reginald Clavering. Clavering's keen,

handsome eyes became fixed upon her with admiring approval. He was a connoisseur in feminine beauty, and all forms of it appealed to him. But, strange to say, the languid, interesting and somewhat tragic type which Elizabeth Darrell now represented was the most attractive to him, perhaps because it is the rarest.

"By Jove! what a woman! I must know her," was his inward comment.

He watched Elizabeth intently, her fragile figure, her peculiar grace of movement, the air of distinction in her whole person and air; and then and there he determined to resurrect his acquaintance with General Brandon, whose relationship to her was obvious, and whom Clavering had no more forgotten than General Brandon had forgotten him.

Reginald Clavering entered the house, and the first sound that met his ears was something between a wail and a shout which came from the upper region. Reginald winced at the sound. His mother still held to her original Baptist faith—about the only thing pertaining to her early life which she had not meekly given up. She was at that moment enjoying the spiritual ministrations of a Baptist minister who came sometimes on Sundays to pray with her and sing camp-meeting hymns—to the intense diversion of the smart English footmen and gay French maids of whom Mrs. Clavering was in deadly fear. And to make it worse for Reginald, Anne Clavering, instead of setting her face against this unchurchmanlike proceeding, actually aided and abetted her mother in her plebeian sort of religion, and joined her clear note to the Reverend Mr. Smithers's bellowing and Mrs. Clavering's husky contralto. The whole thing offended Reginald Clavering's esthetic sense, but it was a proof that he had much that was good in him that he bore these proceedings silently as became a gentleman, a Christian and an Anglican, and made no complaint to anyone except Anne.

As he passed the open library door

Senator Clavering called out to him in that rich and melodious voice which the stenographers in the Senate gallery declared the most agreeable and easily followed voice of any member of the Senate:

"Hello! What infernally pretty woman was that you were escorting just now?"

"Mrs. Darrell, the widowed daughter of General Brandon. General Brandon is one of the vestrymen at St. Gabriel's Chapel," replied Reginald stiffly.

"Yes, fine old fellow. I knew him more than thirty years ago when he was a captain of infantry out on the plains, and I was a sutler, as it was called then. Handsome old chap still, and his daughter is like him. You show good taste, my boy. I thought you'd find something entertaining out at that chapel."

Reginald Clavering scorned to reply to this, but went on to his study in another part of the house.

In a few minutes he heard his father's step on the stair, and dutifully opened the door for him. Clavering entered, threw himself in a great chair, and began to look around him with an amused smile. The room was a museum of ecclesiastical pictures and gimcracks.

"When I was your age," said Clavering, laughing openly, "I hadn't a room like this—I shared a board shanty with a fellow from God knows where, who had served a term in State's prison—but he was the finest smelter expert I ever saw, and had the best eye for a pretty woman. You couldn't see the boards in our walls for the pictures of ballet dancers and the like. Nothing in the least like this." And he laughed.

Reginald's pale face flushed with many emotions. His father's tone and manner expressed a frank scorn for him and all his surroundings. Clavering kept on:

"My roommate—nobody had a room to himself in those diggings—taught me how to differentiate among pretty women." Clavering was diverted at

the spectacle of a man shrinking from such a discussion. "Now, of your sisters, Anne is really the best looking—the most effective, that is. Élise and Lydia are of the tulip variety. Anne is something more and different."

"Élise and Lydia are both of them strikingly like you, sir," replied Reginald.

It was the nearest approach to sarcasm he had ever made in his life. Clavering enjoyed the cut at himself immensely.

"Very neat, thank you. Now, I should say that Mrs.—what's her name?—old Brandon's daughter is a remarkably attractive, even beautiful woman, although she strikes me at first glance as one of those women, not exactly young, who haven't yet found themselves. Perhaps you'll show the lady the way."

"Sir," said Reginald after a pause, "you shock me!"

Clavering was not in the least annoyed at this. He looked at Reginald as one studies an amusing specimen and said, as if to himself:

"Good God! that you should be my son!"

Clavering then took up some of the books on the table and began to turn them over, laughing silently to himself the while. The books corresponded with the pictures and ornaments.

Reginald Clavering found all of his family a cross, except his sister Anne, and his father the heaviest cross of all. He was sincerely relieved when Clavering took himself downstairs to his own library again.

It was a handsome library, and quite what the library of a senator, if not a statesman, should be. The walls were lined with encyclopedias, histories and the English classics. Clavering, however, was a student of far more interesting documents than any ever printed in a book. He had studied unceasingly the human subject, and knew men and women as a Greek scholar knows his Sophocles. This knowledge of men had made him not only dazzlingly and superbly successful, but even happy in his way.



The most saintly man on earth might have envied James Clavering his mind, ever at ease; for he knew no morals, and was unmoral rather than immoral.

Two things only in life disturbed him. One was that he would have liked to get rid of his wife, whom he had married when he was barely twenty-one. She had served his turn. Although homely, shapeless and stupid now, she had made him comfortable—in the days when his miner's wages barely kept a humble roof over his head. She had brought her children up properly—Clavering had enough of justice in him not to hold her accountable for the fastness, the vagaries, the love of splendor, the lack of principle that made his eldest and youngest daughters the subject of frequent paragraphs in scandalous newspapers, and had landed one in the divorce court. They were like him—so Clavering admitted to himself, without a blush. His one fear was that they would, as he expressed it, "make fools of themselves." He admired chastity in women and even respected it, so far as he could feel respect for anything, and he would, if he could, have kept all the women in his family strictly virtuous. But he never was quite at ease about either *Élise* or *Lydia*; and when he saw the simple way in which *Élise* had slipped off the matrimonial fetters Clavering had begun to fear greatly—those two girls were so extremely like himself!

He knew well enough from whom *Reginald* inherited his temperament. *Mrs. Clavering's* father had been a weak, well-meaning Baptist preacher, and *Reginald* was a replica of him, plus a college education and a large allowance superadded. Where *Anne* came in Clavering frankly acknowledged himself beaten. She inherited his own strong will and her mother's gentleness of address. But she had an innate delicacy, a singular degree of social sense, a power of making herself felt and respected that Clavering admired, but the origin of which he could not trace. She was the one person in the world whom he feared and

respected. It was due to her that the Claverings had any real social status whatever. It was through her, and for her alone, that certain honest, dignified and punctilious senators and public officials came to the grand Clavering dinners and musicals, and allowed their wives to come. It was *Anne* who would have to be vanquished when, as Clavering had always intended, he should get a divorce from his wife and marry again. He had not attempted this, merely because, so far, the women who would have married him he did not want or could get on easier terms, and the women he might have wanted would not have him at any price. *Anne* was known as her mother's champion, and Clavering knew that she would fight the divorce with all the skill, courage and pertinacity which, as *Baskerville* had truly said, was all she had inherited from her father. She had in her, disguised by much suavity and sweetness, a touch of aggressiveness, a noble wilfulness that would not be reasoned away. Clavering knew that the tussle of his life would come when the divorce was seriously mooted; but he was not the less ready for the tussle.

The first sight of *Elizabeth Darrell* had impressed him wonderfully—impressed him to the extent of making him resolve to renew his acquaintance with *General Brandon*; and while he was turning the mode of this over in his mind he was summoned to luncheon. At luncheon all of the family assembled—*Élise* and *Lydia* in elaborate *négligées*, *Anne* simply but properly dressed. She sat next her mother at the table and was that poor creature's only outspoken champion.

"So you had a nice morning with the psalm-singing and all that?" said *Élise* to *Anne*.

"Very nice," *Anne* replied. "*Mama* seemed to enjoy it very much."

"We had a very nice morning, too," replied *Élise*. "*The Brentwood-Baldwins* glared at us as we went into church; they will never forgive us for getting that pew in the middle aisle, so close to the *President's*. Then, after

church, Count Rosalka asked to walk home with me. Lydia got Laurison, the new British third secretary, so we sent the carriage on and walked out Connecticut avenue with all the Seventh street shopkeepers. It was very amusing, though."

"It must have been," said Clavering gravely. "You must have recalled the time when you would have thought yourselves as rich as Pierpont Morgan and Rockefeller combined if you had been as well dressed as a Seventh street shopkeeper's daughter. It was only twelve years ago, you recall, since I struck pay dirt in mines and politics."

Elise and Lydia both smiled pleasantly. They were their father's own daughters, and along with many of his vices they inherited his superb good humor, which never gave way except to a preconcerted burst of imposing wrath.

"I remember those days quite well," said Anne. Her voice, as well as her looks, was quite different from her sisters'. Instead of their rich and resonant tones, beautiful like their father's, Anne's voice had a dove-like quality of cooing softness, but she could always make herself heard.

"I remember," she continued, touching her mother's coarse hand outspread on the table, "when mama used to make our gowns, and we looked quite as nice as the girls who could afford to have their clothes made by a dress-maker."

"Them was happy days," said Mrs. Clavering. It was her only remark during luncheon.

They talked of their plans for the coming week, as people do to whom pleasure and leisure are new and intoxicating things. Anne was plied with questions about Mrs. Luttrell's dinner. She told freely all about it, being secretive only about Baskerville, merely mentioning that he was present.

"A more toploftical, stuck-up F.F.V. I never saw than this same Mr. Baskerville—and as dull as ditchwater besides," said Lydia.

Here Reginald spoke.

"Mr. Baskerville is very highly es-

teemed by the bishop of the diocese," he said.

"And by people of a good deal more brains than the bishop of the diocese," replied Clavering. "Baskerville is one of the brainiest men of his age I ever knew. He is fighting me in this K. F. R. business, but all the same I have a high opinion of his gray matter, and I wish you two girls—Elise and Lydia—knew men like Baskerville instead of foreign rapsallions and fortune-hunters like Rosalka. And I wish you went to dinners such as Anne went to last night instead of scampering over the town to all sorts of larky places with all sorts of larky people."

To this Lydia replied. So far, she had achieved neither marriage nor divorce, but she was not averse to either.

"I think the dinners Anne goes to must be precious dull. Now, our men and our parties, whatever they are, aren't dull. I never laughed so much in my life as I did at Rosalka's stories."

Clavering's face grew black. He was no better than he should be himself, and ethically he made no objection to his daughters amusing themselves in any way but one; but old prejudices and superstitions made him delicate on the one point upon which he suspected two of his daughters were the least squeamish. He said nothing, however, nor did Anne or Reginald; it was a subject none of them cared to discuss.

When luncheon was over Mrs. Clavering and Anne made ready for their early Sunday afternoon walk—a time to which Mrs. Clavering looked forward all the week and with which Anne never allowed any of her own engagements to interfere.

Meanwhile Clavering himself, interested for the first time in the tall, shabby house across the way, walked out upon the broad stone steps of his own palace and watched the windows opposite, hoping for a glimpse of Elizabeth Darrell's face. While he stood there smoking and apparently engaged in the harmless enjoyment of a lovely autumn afternoon, Richard Baskerville approached. Baskerville denied himself the pleasure of seeking Anne

in her own home, but he often found himself, without his own volition, in the places where he would be likely to meet her, and so he was walking along the street in which she lived. Seeing Clavering on the steps Baskerville would have passed with a cool nod, but Clavering stopped him; and the younger man, thinking Anne Clavering might be within sight or might appear, compromised with his conscience and entered into conversation with Clavering. It was always an effort on Baskerville's part to avoid Clavering, whose extraordinary charm of manner and personality was a part of his capital. Baskerville, deep in the study of Clavering's career, felt a genuine curiosity about the man and how he did things and what he really thought of himself and his own doings. He reckoned Clavering to be a colossal and very attractive scoundrel, whom he was earnestly seeking to destroy; and his relations were further complicated with Clavering by the fact that Anne Clavering was—a very interesting woman. This Baskerville admitted to himself; he had got that far on the road to love.

The senator, with the brilliant smile which made him handsomer than ever, said to Baskerville:

"We may as well enjoy the privilege of speaking before you do me up in the matter of those K. F. R. land grants."

The younger man cleverly avoided shaking hands with Clavering, but replied, also smiling:

"Your attorneys say we sha'n't be able to do you up, senator."

"I hope they're right. I swear, in that business the amount of lying and perjury, if placed on end, would reach to the top of the Washington Monument. Have a cigar?"

Such indeed was Baskerville's own view of the lying and perjury, but he opined that it was all on Senator Clavering's side, and he was trying to prove it.

He got out of taking one of Clavering's cigars—for he was nice upon points of honor—by taking a cigarette out of his case.

"I don't know what you youngsters are coming to," said Clavering, as he smoked. "Cigarettes and vermouth, and that sort of thing, instead of a good strong cigar and four fingers of whisky."

"I was on the football team at the university for three terms, and we had to lead lives like boarding-school misses," replied Baskerville, toying with his cigarette. "Our coach was about the stiffest man against whisky and cigars I ever knew—and used to preach to us seven days in the week that a couple of cigars a day and four fingers of whisky would shortly land any fellow at the undertaker's. I fell from grace, it is true, directly I was graduated, but that coach's gruesome predictions have stuck to me like the shirt of Nemesias, as your colleague, Senator Jephson, said the other day on the floor of the Senate."

"Jephson's an ass. He is the sort of man that would define a case of mixed property as a suit for a mule."

"Hardly. And he's an honest old blunderbuss."

"Still, he's an ass, as I say. His honesty doesn't prevent that."

"Well, yes, in a way, it does. I'm not a professional moralist, but I don't believe there is any really good substitute for honesty."

Then Baskerville suddenly turned red; the discussion of honesty with a man whose dishonesty he firmly believed in, and was earnestly trying to prove, was a blunder into which he did not often fall. Clavering, who saw everything, noted the other's flush, understood it perfectly and smiled in appreciation of the joke.

Baskerville did not propose to emphasize his mistake by running away, and was prepared to stay some minutes longer, when the entrance doors were swung open by the gorgeous footman, and Mrs. Clavering, leaning upon Anne's arm, appeared for a walk. When he saw his wife Clavering's face grew dark; that old woman, with her bad grammar and her big hands, was always in his way. He said good morning abruptly and went indoors at once.

Anne greeted Baskerville with a charming smile, and introduced him at once to her mother. Something in his manner to Mrs. Clavering revealed the antique respect he had for every decent woman, no matter how unattractive she might be. He assisted Mrs. Clavering down the great stone steps as if she were a young and pretty girl instead of a lumbering, ignorant, elderly woman, and Mrs. Clavering found courage to address him, a thing she rarely did to strangers.

"I guess," she said diffidently, "you've got an old mother of your own that you help up and down—you do it so easy."

"No; I wish I had," answered Baskerville, with a kindness in his voice that both the old woman and the young one felt. "My mother has been dead a long time; but I have a fine old aunt, Mrs. Luttrell, who makes me fetch and carry like an expressman's horse, and then she says I am not half so attentive to her as I ought to be. Perhaps Miss Clavering has told you about her—I had the pleasure of dining with Miss Clavering at my aunt's last night."

"Yes, she did, and she told me you were all real nice," answered Mrs. Clavering—and was appalled at her own daring.

Anne and Baskerville talked about the dinner, as they walked along the sunny, quiet street. Anne had enjoyed every moment spent in Mrs. Luttrell's house, and said so. Mrs. Clavering walked with difficulty, but the young man's arm at the street-crossings was a real assistance to her; and without talking down to Mrs. Clavering, or embarrassing her by direct remarks, he skilfully included her in the conversation.

Mrs. Clavering felt increasingly comfortable. Here was a man who did not scorn a woman because she was old and plain. For once the poor woman did not feel in the way with another person besides Anne. She ventured several commonplace remarks, to all of which Baskerville listened with pleasant courtesy. He began to see in this ordinary,

uneducated woman a certain hint of attractiveness in her gentleness of voice and softness of eyes that were reflected and intensified in the slim and graceful daughter by her side. Anne turned her soft, expressive eyes—her only real beauty—on Baskerville with a look of gratitude in them. Her life at home was one long fight for her mother's happiness and dignity, for whom no one of her family had the least respect, except herself and her brother Reginald; and Reginald was but a poor creature in many ways. If Baskerville had sat up all night for a month trying to devise a plan to ingratiate himself with Anne Clavering he could not have done it better than by his courtesy to her mother. And he, appreciating the strong affection, the courage, the absence of false pride, the unselfishness of Anne Clavering in this particular, admired her the more.

As they walked slowly along and talked, a kind of intimacy seemed to spring into being between them. Gratitude is a strong incentive to regard on both sides, and Baskerville's attitude toward Mrs. Clavering touched Anne to the heart. Their objective point was Dupont Circle, which at that hour was tolerably free from the colored gentry and the baby carriages which make it populous eighteen hours out of the twenty-four. But Mrs. Clavering was destined to receive further distinguished attention during that episode of the walk. When she was seated comfortably on a bench Baskerville proposed to Anne that he show her, on the other side of the Circle, a silver maple tree in great autumnal glory.

"Now, do go, my dear," said Mrs. Clavering; "I'd like to set here awhile. Do, Mr. Baskerville, take her off—she ain't left me an hour this day, and she oughter have a little pleasure."

"Come, obey your mother," Baskerville said, and Anne, smiling, walked off with him. Mrs. Clavering, good soul, was like other mothers, and as her darling child went off with Baskerville she thought:

"How nice them two look together! And he is such a civil-spoken, sensible



young man. Anne deserves a good husband—and if——”

This train of thought was interrupted by General Brandon. He, too, after his luncheon, was out for a Sunday airing, and passing the bench on which Mrs. Clavering sat, the good woman, with new-found courage, looked up at him and actually ventured upon a timid bow. She had recognized him from the first time she had seen him, when she moved into their new and splendid house; and she had a perfectly clear recollection of the old sutler days, when General Brandon was a handsome young captain, who always had a polite word for the sutler's wife. But she had never before, in the two years they had lived opposite each other, had the courage to speak to him. Her success with Baskerville emboldened her, and as General Brandon made her an elaborate, old-fashioned bow Mrs. Clavering said:

“This used to be Cap'n Brandon—a long time ago, just before the war broke out.”

“Yes, madam,” replied General Brandon; “and you, I believe, are Mrs. Clavering? I remember quite well when Mr. Clavering brought you, a blooming bride, to the post.”

Mrs. Clavering sighed. She was so lonely in the big house, so continually snubbed by her husband, by her daughters Élise and Lydia, by the uppish footman and the giggling maids; she was so cut off from everything she had ever known before that the sight of persons connected with those early days was like water in the desert to her. She smiled a deprecating smile, and answered:

“I've seen you on the street often enough. You live opposite our house, don't you?”

“Yes,” said General Brandon. Then Mrs. Clavering made a faint indication that he should sit down, and he placed himself on the bench by her side.

“I recognized both you and Senator Clavering,” said the general, “but as neither of you showed any recollection of me I hesitated to speak.”

Mrs. Clavering sighed.

“You are the first person since I come to Washington that I ever seen as far back as them days at the army post.”

General Brandon, the most chivalrous of men, saw in Mrs. Clavering the timid longing to talk about old days and old ways, and he himself had a fondness for reminiscences; so the pair of old fogies entered into talk, feeling a greater degree of acquaintanceship in meeting after that long stretch of years than they had ever known before. When Anne and Baskerville returned, twenty minutes later, quite an active conversation was going on.

“Anne, my dear,” said Mrs. Clavering, actually in a self-possessed manner, “this is General Brandon, who lives opposite our house. I knew him in them old times at the army post—and he's got a daughter, a widder, come home from England to live with him. Anne, you must go and call on her.”

“I shall, with much pleasure,” replied Anne, bestowing on General Brandon her charming smile. Then, after a little more talk, it was time to return. General Brandon gallantly offered Mrs. Clavering his arm, and the poor lady, embarrassed but pleased, was escorted with courtly grace to her door. Anne and Baskerville had meanwhile made vast strides in intimacy. It was not, however, enough for Anne to repeat her invitation to call, but Mrs. Clavering, when she arrived at the house which was by courtesy hers plucked up extraordinary courage and said:

“I hope, Mr. Baskerville, you will favor us with your company on Thursday, which is our receiving day. General Brandon has promised to come and I'll be real disappointed if you don't come, too.”

It was the first invitation that Mrs. Clavering had ever given on her own initiative, and she gave it so diffidently, and in such simple good faith, that a man would have been a brute to decline it. So Baskerville accepted it with thanks, wondering meanwhile whether he were not a rascal in so doing. But he wanted very much to see Anne

Clavering as often as he could, and the Montague and Capulet act came to him quite naturally and agreeably—the more so when he saw the gleam of gratification in Annie's eyes at his acceptance. She said simply:

"I shall be glad to see you." And then, turning to General Brandon, she added: "We shall, I hope, have the pleasure then of meeting Mrs. Darrell."

"My dear young lady, you are most kind," answered General Brandon, "but my daughter is so lately widowed—not yet a year and a half—that I feel sure it will be quite impossible to her feelings for her to appear at all in society now. Nevertheless, I shall give her your kind invitation, and she will be most gratified. I shall do myself the honor and pleasure of attending."

And then they parted, Anne and Baskerville each reckoning that day to have been one of the pleasantest of their lives, and wondering when they should have the good fortune to meet in that sweet, companionable manner again.

#### IV

At dinner that night General Brandon told Elizabeth about his meeting with Mrs. Clavering and the renewal of their acquaintance.

"The poor lady seemed much pleased at meeting someone associated with her former life," said General Brandon. "She invited me to call on Thursday, which is their first reception day of the season, and especially urged that you should come. I believe their receptions are large and brilliant; the newspapers are always full of them; so I told her that owing to your very recent mourning it would be impossible for you to go to any large or gay entertainment. I have no doubt Sara Luttrell will ask you to many of her parties—she keeps a very gay house—and it is a source of the keenest regret to me that you cannot for the present accept invitations. But another winter I shall hope, my dear child, that you will have the

spirit to enter once more into the society you are so admirably fitted to adorn."

Good General Brandon was quite unconscious that in the society to which Elizabeth had been accustomed a year was considered the period of a widow's mourning. He never dreamed for one moment that she could have been induced to go into society at that time. As a matter of fact, it was the one thing which Elizabeth really hoped might rouse her from the torpor of mind and heart into which she had sunk in the last few months. She had a good and comprehensive mind, not much improved by reading, since her whole time during her married life had been taken up with the incessant round of small gaieties which prevail at most military posts. Then had come that year in London, in which she had really seen the best English society and had liked it, as everyone must who knows it. Society had become a habit, although very far from a passion with her, and she had expected to return to it, as one resumes one's daily habits. She had taken a strange interest in the Claverings from the very beginning—they constituted her very first impressions of Washington; and she would have found some diversion from her sad and wearying thoughts in Mrs. Luttrell's brilliant and interesting house. But it was impossible for her to go against her father's implied ideas of propriety. He had always assumed that she was properly and dutifully heartbroken at her husband's death. She did indeed mourn good, brave, honest, stupid Jack Darrell as a woman mourns a husband for whom she feels gratitude and tenderness, without being in the least in love with him; all the sentiment which belongs to love she had secretly and hopelessly given to Pelham. She often thought if she had not been so young, so ignorant, she never would have married Darrell.

"I think you should force yourself, however painful it may be to your feelings, to go to see Sara Luttrell

some day when she is not formally receiving," said General Brandon, thinking he was proposing a tremendous sacrifice to Elizabeth, and he felt quite triumphant when she agreed to go.

When the Thursday afternoon came there was no need to tell Elizabeth that the Clavering receptions were large and brilliant. By four o'clock carriages came pouring into the street, and by five there was almost an *impasse*. Great numbers of stylish men, both foreigners and Americans, passed in and out the splendid doors.

While Elizabeth was watching this procession with curious interest Mrs. Luttrell's great old-fashioned coach, with the long-tailed black horses, stopped before the tall, shabby house, and Serena brought up Mrs. Luttrell's and Baskerville's cards. Mrs. Luttrell, although militant, was not the sort of woman to hit another woman when she was down, and she was most gracious when Elizabeth appeared. The sight of the dingy drawing-room, of Elizabeth's pallor and evident signs of stress and trial touched Mrs. Luttrell. She mentioned to Elizabeth that a card would be sent her for a large dinner which she was giving within a fortnight, and when Elizabeth gently declined Mrs. Luttrell was really sorry. Baskerville was sincerely cordial. He had liked Elizabeth as a girl, and her forlornness now touched him as it did Mrs. Luttrell.

When their visit was over and they were once more out of the house Mrs. Luttrell exclaimed:

"That's Dick Brandon's doings—that poor Elizabeth not going a place and moping in that hole of a house. If she would but go about a bit, and leave her card at the British Embassy, where she would certainly be invited, she could see something of society and recover her spirits and good looks. By the way, I think she's really more enticing in her pallor and her black gown than when she was in the flush of her beauty. Of course, she looks much older. Now, as I'm going into the Claverings' I suppose you will leave me."

Baskerville, with a hangdog look, replied:

"I'm going into the Claverings' too."

Mrs. Luttrell's handsome mouth came open, and her ermine cape fell from her shoulders without her even so much as knowing it.

"Yes," said Baskerville, assuming a bullying air, now that the cat was out of the bag, "Mrs. Clavering asked me last Sunday, and I accepted."

"Where on earth, Richard Bas——?"

"Did I see Mrs. Clavering? I met her out walking with Miss Clavering. Mrs. Clavering is a most excellent woman—quiet and unobtrusive—and I swear there is something of her in Miss Clavering."

"Richard Baskerville, you are in love with Anne Clavering! I know it; I feel it."

"Don't be a fool, Sara Luttrell. Because I happen to pay a visit at a house where I have been asked and could have gone a year ago, you at once discover a mare's nest. That's Sara Luttrell all over."

"And what becomes of the doubtful propriety of your going to Senator Clavering's house? And suppose you succeed in driving him out of public life, as you are trying to do?"

"I swear you are the most provoking old woman in Washington. Hold your tongue, and come along with your dutiful nephew."

Grasping her firmly by the arm, Baskerville marched Mrs. Luttrell up the broad stone steps of the Clavering house.

The splendid doors were opened noiselessly by gorgeous footmen, who looked like the prize-winners at a chrysanthemum show. The entrance was magnificent and through the half-drawn silken draperies of the wide doorways they could see the whole superb suite of rooms opening upon the large Moorish hall. Great masses of flowers were everywhere, and the mellow glow of wax lights and tinted lamp globes made the autumn twilight softly radiant.

Half a dozen butterfly debutantes

were serving tea in the huge dining-room, furnished with priceless teakwood and black oak, bright with pictures and mirrors, a magnificent Turkish carpet on the parquet floor and chandeliers from a royal palace lighting the dim splendor of the room. Here, brilliant with candelabra, was set out a great table, from which an expensive collation was served by more gorgeous footmen. This was the doing of Élise and Lydia, who overruled Anne's desire for a simple tea table set in the library. There, however, a great gold and silver bowl was constantly replenished with champagne punch, and over this Élise and Lydia presided, much preferring the champagne bowl to the tea table.

The library was thronged with men, old and young, native and foreign. Élise and Lydia, their handsome faces flushed and smiling, their elaborate gowns iridescent with gold and silver embroidery and spangles sweeping the floor, laughed, talked and flirted to their hearts' content. They also drank punch with a great many men who squeezed their hands on the sly, looked into their large dark eyes and always went away laughing.

Mrs. Luttrell, escorted by Baskerville, and meeting acquaintances at every turn, entered the great drawing-room, which was a symphony in green and gold. Near the door Anne Clavering, in a simple gray gown, stood by her mother, who was seated. Anne received the guests, and then introduced them to Mrs. Clavering, who made the pretense of receiving, looking the picture of misery meanwhile. The poor soul would much rather have remained upstairs, but on this point Anne was inexorable—her mother must show herself in her own drawing-room. A handsome black gown, appropriate to an elderly lady, showed Mrs. Clavering at her best, and Anne, with perfect taste, grace and patience, silently demanded and received for her mother the respect which was due her and which there was occasionally some difficulty in exacting.

As Anne caught sight of Mrs. Lut-

trell she smiled with obvious pleasure, but on seeing Baskerville her face lighted up in a way which by no means escaped Mrs. Luttrell's sharp eyes.

Mrs. Clavering was nearly frightened out of her life on the rare occasions when the redoubtable Mrs. Luttrell called, but on this afternoon Mrs. Luttrell was as soft as milk and as sweet as honey. But Mrs. Clavering was not the least afraid of Baskerville, and said to him earnestly, as he took her hand:

"I'm real glad to see you."

"And I am very glad to be able to come," answered Baskerville. Then, seating himself by her side, he began to talk to her so gently, on subjects the poor lady was interested in, that she was more delighted with him than ever. A soft flush came into Anne's delicate cheeks; she appreciated the sweet and subtle flattery in Baskerville's attitude. It was not interest in Mrs. Clavering's conversation, nor even the pity he might have felt for her forlorn condition which induced him to spend twenty minutes of his visit in talking to her.

Meantime the dusk was deepening. Many visitors were departing and few coming. Mrs. Luttrell was entertaining a select coterie of men around the large fireplace at the other end of the room, and Baskerville was the only person left near Anne and Mrs. Clavering.

"Will you be kind enough," he said to Anne, "to go with me to get a cup of tea? I see a table in yonder, but I am afraid of so many young girls at once. I think I can count six of them. Now, if you will go with me I shall feel as brave as a lion."

The temptation was strong, but Anne looked down at her mother. Apprehension was written on Mrs. Clavering's simple, homely face at the notion of being left alone.

"Why can't Mr. Baskerville have his tea with me?" said she. "There ain't any more folks coming. Make Peer bring a table here, Anne, and we'll have it comfortable together."

"Yes," Baskerville added, drawing



up a chair. "Mrs. Clavering is far more amiable and hospitable than you. I am sure you would never have thought of so kind a solution."

Anne, with a happy smile, gave Pierre the order, and in a minute they were sitting about a little table, with an opportunity for a few minutes' talk at a moderate pitch of voice differing from those hurried, merry meetings in a crowd of laughing, talking, moving people which usually constitute a Washington call.

While they were sitting there, all three enjoying themselves, and Mrs. Clavering not the least of the three, a belated caller was announced, General Brandon. The general was in his Sunday frock coat, which had seen good service, and his silk hat which belonged by rights on the retired list; but each was carefully brushed and clearly belonged to a gentleman. General Brandon himself, handsome, soldierly, his white mustache and hair neatly clipped, was grace, elegance and amiability personified. His head was none of the best, but for beauty, courage and gentleness he was unmatched.

Anne received him with more than her usual cordiality, and Mrs. Clavering was so pleased at seeing him that she actually invited him to sit down at her tea table and have tea. This he did, explaining why his daughter had sent her cards instead of coming.

"Another year, I hope, my dear madam, my daughter may be persuaded to re-enter society, which, if you will pardon a father's pride, I think she adorns. But at present she is overwhelmed with grief at her loss—it is scarcely eighteen months since she became a widow and lost the best of husbands."

General Brandon prattled on, and presently said:

"I had hoped to meet Senator Clavering here this afternoon, and made my visit late on purpose. His exacting senatorial duties, however, must leave him little time for social relaxation."

"I think I hear his step in the hall

now," said Anne. "He will, I know, be very much pleased to meet you again."

As she spoke Clavering's firm tread was heard, and he entered, smiling, debonair and distinguished-looking. Nobody would have dreamed from anything in his air or looks that this man was nearing a crisis in his fate, and that even then his conduct was being revealed in the newspapers and examined by his fellow-senators in a way which opened a wide, straight vista to State's prison.

Clavering was surprised, but undeniably pleased, and even amused at seeing Baskerville; and Baskerville felt like a hound, and inwardly swore at himself for letting the wish to see a woman's eyes bring him to Clavering's house. He put a bold face upon it, however, shook Clavering's outstretched hand and called himself a fool and a rogue for so doing.

The warmth of Clavering's greeting to General Brandon delighted the simple old general. Clavering, who had too much sound sense to avoid allusions to his early life or to tell lies about it, recalled the time when he was a sutler and General Brandon was an officer. Then he carried the latter off to an alcove in the library, which was now deserted, except by Elise and Lydia. These two young women, reclining like odalisques among the cushions of a luxurious sofa, discussed Rosalka and the rest of their swains in low voices and in terms which luckily their father did not overhear.

Into the alcove Clavering caused his choicest brands of whisky and cigars to be brought, and at once plunged into talk, and into that talk infused all his powers of pleasing, which soon produced upon the simple old general a species of intoxication. If anyone had told him that Clavering's attentions were due to the sight, more than once obtained since Sunday, of Elizabeth Darrell's graceful figure and interesting, melancholy face, General Brandon would have called that person a liar.

"You know," said Clavering, as soon as the two were comfortably established with the whisky and cigars, "that I am being badgered and bothered by a set of sharks, calling themselves lawyers, who want to rob me of every dollar of my fortune. You have perhaps read in the newspapers something about this K. F. R. land grant business."

"I am aware the public prints have given considerable space to it," replied General Brandon, "but I have no knowledge of the merits of the case."

"Neither have the newspapers. The long and short of it is that the sharks, after fighting me through every court in the country, where I may say I have managed to hold my own pretty well, have managed by political wire-pulling to get a Senate committee to investigate the matter. Now, I don't want to be lacking in senatorial courtesy, but of all the collection of asses, dunderheads and old women, sneaks, hypocrites and sniveling dogs that ever were huddled together, that select committee of my esteemed contemporaries. Good Lord! let's take a drink."

General Brandon drank solemnly. Whisky of that brand was not to be treated lightly.

"I know well all the country embraced in and contiguous to that K. F. R. land grant," said the general, putting down his glass reverently. "I scouted and fought and hunted over all that region more than forty years ago, when I was a young lieutenant just turned loose from West Point."

"Why, then," cried Clavering, his handsome eyes lighting up, "you might be of real service to me." He did not specify what manner of service he meant, and General Brandon innocently thought Clavering meant about the K. F. R. land grant. But no man who ever lived could tell Clavering anything he did not know about any piece of property he had ever owned; least of all could simple, guileless General Brandon tell him anything.

"I should be most happy," replied

the general. "I have a considerable quantity of memoranda, maps and surveys of the region which are quite at your service."

"Capital!" said Clavering, his deep eyes shining with a keen delight. "Now, as the investigation is going on, which you have seen in the newspapers, I shall have to make immediate use of any information you might be able to give me. Suppose you were to let me come over to your house to-night and take our first view of what you have? And of course you'll stay and dine with me."

"I thank you very much, senator, but I cannot leave my daughter to dine alone—she is too much alone, poor child. And immediately after dinner I am engaged to spend an hour with an old friend, General Mayse, a former classmate of mine who is now afflicted with paralysis and to whom I pay a weekly visit. Besides, I should have to rummage among my papers to find those that we require. But to-morrow night I shall be at your service."

But it was not Clavering's nature to delay the accomplishment of any wish. He wanted to see and know Elizabeth Darrell, so he said cordially:

"At all events I should like to talk the matter over with you. Would you allow me to come in this evening, then, after you have returned from your visit?"

"Certainly, senator. I shall be at home by half-after nine."

Then Clavering, seeing that General Brandon was his, began to talk about other things, even to hint at chances of making money. To this General Brandon only sighed and said:

"Those enterprises are for men with capital. I have only the equity in my house and my salary, and I cannot, for my daughter's sake, jeopardize what little I have. She was left with but a small provision from her husband's estate, which was strictly entailed."

Clavering could not refrain from smiling at General Brandon's simplicity in refusing such an offer, if even but a

hint, for such a reason; but he said no more on the subject.

As the general passed into the drawing-room to say good-bye to Mrs. Clavering he was surprised to find Baskerville still sitting at the tea table. Baskerville had not been asked to stay to dinner, but when Mrs. Luttrell was ready to leave a very mild invitation from Mrs. Clavering, who had no notion of the duration of fashionable visits, had made him ask permission to remain—a permission which Mrs. Luttrell gave with a wink. Anne was not displeased with him for staying—her eyes and smile conveyed as much, and, man-like, Baskerville had succumbed to the temptation. But when General Brandon came in and found him the very last visitor in the drawing-room he felt himself distinctly caught, and made his farewells with more haste than grace. Mrs. Clavering urged him to come again, and Anne's tones conveyed *auf Wiedersehen* to him as eloquently as a tone can without specific words; nevertheless, when Baskerville found himself out in the cool, crisp night he began to doubt, as he had ever doubted, the propriety of his going to Senator Clavering's house at all. But General Brandon was saying to him most earnestly, as they stood under the lamp-post before going their different ways:

"Senator Clavering is a very cruelly maligned man; of that I am certain. And I think, Mr. Baskerville, that most of the testimony you and the Civil Service League and the K. F. R. attorneys have collected will break down when it is introduced before the committee. Why, Senator Clavering tells me that he has been accused of wholesale bribery, of having bought his seat in the Senate, of having bought up courts and legislatures on evidence that wouldn't hang a dog. But he will be triumphantly vindicated—I make no doubt at all of that."

"I wish he might be," replied Baskerville, with a degree of sincerity that would scarcely have been credited; "but I don't think he can be."

When General Brandon let himself

into his own house dinner was ready to be served. He was full of enthusiasm about the Claverings. At the table he assured Elizabeth of his entire belief in Clavering and of his respect for him. Mrs. Clavering he pronounced to be a most excellent and unpretending woman, Anne altogether admirable, Reginald Clavering a worthy fellow and Elise Denman and Lydia Clavering two much abused young women, in whom mere high spirits and unconventionality had been mistaken for a degree of imprudence of which he felt sure they could never be guilty. Then he mentioned Clavering's proposed visit, and asked Elizabeth if she would, the next day, find the trunk in which he kept certain papers, open it and get out of it everything dated between '56 and '61.

When dinner was over and General Brandon had gone out to pay his weekly visit to his sick friend, Elizabeth went upstairs to a small back room, called by courtesy the study. Here were General Brandon's few books; he was not and had never been a man of books, but he liked to be considered bookish. There was in the room an open grate fire, a student's lamp and some old-fashioned tables and easy-chairs. To this room Elizabeth had succeeded in imparting an air of comfort. She sat down before the fire to spend the evening alone, as she had spent so many evenings alone in the last eighteen months, and would, she feared, continue to spend them for the rest of her life. She had expected to find her life in Washington dull, but the weeks she had been at home had been duller than she had thought possible. Her father's old friends had called upon her, but they were all staid and elderly persons, and the circle had grown pitifully small in her ten years of absence. Those ten years had practically obliterated her own acquaintances in the ever changing population of Washington, and the few persons left in the gay world whom she knew, like Mrs. Luttrell, it was plain that her father did not expect her to cultivate.

One resource—reading—occurred to

her on this particular evening. She had a mind well fitted for books, but she had never been thrown with bookish people, and reading had formed no essential part of her life. Pelham was a man of great intelligence, and a reader; but both his intelligence and his reading were somewhat confined to his profession. No matter where Elizabeth's thinking began, Pelham was sure to come into it somewhere. She started up from her chair as the recollection of him, which always hovered near her, took shape in thought and almost in speech, and going to the bookcase took out the first volume her hand fell upon. It was an old translation of Herodotus, and Elizabeth, determined upon a mental opiate, opened it at random and read on resolutely. She fell upon that wonderful story of Cyrus, the reputed son of Mithradates the herdsman; and in following the grandly simple old narrative, told with so much of art, of grace, of convincing perspicacity that not even a translation can wholly destroy its majestic beauty, Elizabeth lost herself in the shadowy, ancient past. She was roused by Serena's voice and Serena's hand, as black as the Ethiopians in Herodotus's time who worshiped no other gods save Jupiter and Bacchus. Serena produced a card. It was simple and correct, and read: "Mr. James Clavering," with the address.

"It is Senator Clavering," said Elizabeth in a moment. "Tell him that General Brandon is not at home."

"De gent'mun seh he got er 'p'intment wid de gin'l, an' he gwine ter wait fer him. I thinks, Miss 'Liz'beth, you better lemme ax him up heah. De parlor is jes' freezin' col'," answered Serena, who never forgot that people should be made comfortable.

"Ask him up, then," replied Elizabeth.

She was somewhat flurried at the thought of receiving Clavering alone, but there was no help for it.

In a few minutes Serena ushered Clavering into the room. At close range he was even more attractive

than at a distance. It was difficult to associate any idea of advancing age with him. Maturity was all that was indicated by his handsome, smooth-shaven face, his compact and elegant figure, his iron-gray hair. Manual labor had left but one mark upon him—his hands were rough and marred by the miner's tools he had used. He was perfectly well dressed and perfectly at his ease. He introduced himself with the natural and unaffected grace which had been his along with his sutler's license and miner's tools.

"This, I presume, is Mrs. Darrell. I thank you very much for allowing me to wait for General Brandon's return."

He said no word about his appointment with General Brandon being at half-after nine while then it was only a little past eight.

Elizabeth invited him to sit down, and herself took a seat opposite him. The color which came into her pale face very much enhanced her looks, and Clavering thought he had never seen so interesting a woman. Her slender black figure unconsciously assumed a pose of singular grace and ease, the delicate color mounted slowly into her pale cheeks, and she was indeed worthy of any man's notice. And as her personality had struck Clavering with great force at the very first glimpse he had of her, so, seeing her close at hand and her attention fixed on himself, she overpowered him quickly, as the warm, sweet scent of the jessamine flower is overpowering. It was what he would have called, had he been thirty years younger, love at first sight. Clavering's coming into the room was, like some new, strong force, making itself felt over everything. The small room seemed full of him and nothing else. He was by nature a dominant personality, and he dominated Elizabeth Darrell as strangely and suddenly as she had cast a spell over him.

"My father will regret very much not being here when you came. Perhaps he misunderstood the hour of your appointment," she said.



Clavering's white teeth shone in a smile.

"Don't trouble about that. Besides, it has given me the pleasure of seeing you."

Elizabeth was not unmindful of the fact that Clavering was a married man, with a wife across the street; and his words, which would have been merely those of courtesy in most men, could not be so interpreted, for Clavering was not a man of pretty speeches.

He picked up the volume of Herodotus which lay on the table.

"So you've been reading old Herodotus! That's pretty heavy reading for a young woman, isn't it?"

"I took it up at random just now, and became interested in it," answered Elizabeth.

"You are a great reader, I suppose?"

"N-no. Hardly, that is. But I am very much alone, and I have read a good deal since I have returned to America."

"Why should a woman like you be alone? Why shouldn't you go about and see people and live like other women of your age?"

Elizabeth made no reply to this; she could scarcely admit that her seclusion was more of her father's doing than her own. She was struck by the beauty of Clavering's voice and by the correctness of his speech, which was better than that of many college-bred men.

"How long have you been a widow?" he asked.

"A year and a half."

"And have you any children?"

"No. I lost my only child when he was a baby."

"That's hard on a woman. You women never forget those dead babies. But all your life is before you yet."

"It seems to me it is all behind me."

"Why? Did you love your husband very much?"

Elizabeth had suffered Clavering's questions partly through surprise and partly because Clavering could say and do what he chose. But the

question put to her was so unexpected—it had never been asked of her before—it was so searching, that it completely disconcerted her. She remained silent, while her eyes, turned upon Clavering, wore a look of trouble and uncertainty.

"A great many women don't love their husbands," said Clavering, "and if they are left widows their feelings are very complex. They think they ought to grieve for their husbands, but they don't."

The color dropped suddenly out of Elizabeth's cheeks. Clavering's words fitted her case so exactly and so suddenly that she was startled and frightened. It was as if he had looked into her soul and read at a glance her inmost secrets. She half-expected him to say next that she had loved another man than her husband. And as for applying the common rules of behavior to a man like Clavering, it was absurd on the face of it.

He was leaning toward Elizabeth, his elbow on the arm of his chair, his eyes fixed upon her with a kind of admiring scrutiny. He found her quite as interesting as he had expected, and he ardently desired to know more about her and, what is as great a mark of interest, to tell her more about himself.

Elizabeth remained silent for awhile, and then forced herself to say:

"My husband was one of the best of men. He was as good as my father."

"That settles it," replied Clavering, with grim humor. "I never knew a woman in my life who spoke of her husband's goodness first who was really in love with him. When a woman is in love with a man it isn't his goodness she thinks of first; it is his love. Now, don't fly off at that; I'm not a conventional man, and you must know it if you ever heard of me before. And I don't mean to be disrespectful. On the contrary, I want your good opinion—I have wanted it ever since the first time I saw you. I was very much struck with you then. I wanted to know you and I planned

to know you. Have I committed any crime?"

"But—but—you are a married man," said Elizabeth.

Clavering laughed as he replied:

"That's downright schoolgirlish. Any boarding-school miss would say the same. Well, I can't help it now that I married a woman totally unsuited to me before I was twenty-one years old. Come, Mrs. Darrell, we are not children. I wanted to know you, I say, and I always try to do what I want to do; don't you—doesn't everybody? Well, let us then know each other. I swear to you I know less of women than I do of any subject I have ever tried to master. True, I never had time until lately, and besides, I was a middle-aged man before I ever met any educated and intelligent women. In the class of life from which I spring women are household drudges and bearers of children, and I never knew them in any other aspect until I was over forty years of age. Then you can't imagine what a stunning revelation to me a woman was who had never done anything but amuse herself and improve herself. Suppose you had never met any educated men until now? Wouldn't you find them very captivating?"

When a man talks to a woman as she has never been talked to before he is certain of finding an interested listener and, it follows, a tolerant listener. So Elizabeth could not disguise her interest in Clavering, nor was it worth while to pretend to be offended with him. The superficial knowledge she had of the vicissitudes of his life was calculated to arouse and fix her attention; and there was so little to do in her present life that she would have been more or less than mortal if she had turned from the first object of interest she had yet met with in her new and changed and dreary life.

She paused awhile before answering Clavering's last question.

"I dare say I should feel so," she answered. "I remember how it was when I was first married and went to

India. Everything interested me. I could not see a native without wanting to ask all manner of questions of him and about him, which of course I could not be allowed to do, and the life there is so strange—their race problem is so different from ours, and all my modes of thought had to be changed. I was in India over eight years, and it was as strange to me when I left it as when I arrived."

Elizabeth had got the talk away from the personal note upon which Clavering had pitched it, and he, seeing he had said enough for a beginning, followed Elizabeth's conversational lead. He asked her many questions about her life in India, all singularly intelligent and well put, because drinking at the fountain of other people's talk had been his chief source of education during his whole life. And Clavering, without being widely read, was far from being an ignorant man. Although he knew not a word of any language except his own, nor the history of any country except his own, he was well acquainted with the history of his own times, and he knew who every living man of importance in his own country and Europe was, and what he was doing. Seeing that Elizabeth was susceptible to the charms of conversation and had a distinct intellectual side, Clavering appealed to her on that side. He told her with an inimitable raciness and humor some of the incidents of his early life in the West, his later adventures, even of his career in the Senate.

"I think I never worked so hard in my life as I have during the five years I've been in the Senate," he said. "No man can come to the Senate of the United States with the education of a sutler, miner, promoter, speculator and what-not—such as I have had—and not work hard; that is, if he expects to be anything else than a dummy. But it isn't in James Clavering to be a dummy anywhere. So I have thought and read and worked and slaved, and bought other men's brains in the last five years as earnestly as any man ever did. The result is that when I open my

mouth now the senators listen. At first the lawyers in the Senate used to hide a grin when I began to speak, and I admit I did make some bad breaks in the beginning. But I saw my way out of that clearly enough. I found a man who was really a great constitutional lawyer, although he had never been able to make more than a bare living out of his profession in Chicago. I have always invested liberally in brains. When you can actually buy brains or news you are buying the two most valuable commodities on earth. Well, when I took up a question I had my man go over the legal aspects of it and put it down in black and white. Then I knew well enough how to use it, and I may say without boasting that I have done as well, or better, than any man of my opportunities now in the Senate. However, I don't compare myself with such men as Andrew Johnson. You know his wife taught him to write, and that man rose to be President of the United States. Of course he wasn't what you would call a scholarly man, like many of the senators, but good Lord! think of the vast propelling force that took an illiterate man from a tailor's bench and gave him such a career as Andrew Johnson, and made him Vice-President of the United States. Those men—and men like me, too—can't be called all-round men, like Senator Thorndyke, for example. All of us have got great big gaps and holes in our knowledge and judgment and conduct that the normal, well-educated man hasn't. But where we are strong, we are stronger than they. Do you know anything about Thorndyke?"

"I have heard my father speak of Mrs. Thorndyke, whose family he knew many years ago, and he visits occasionally at Senator Thorndyke's. Mrs. Thorndyke sent me a request that I would call to see her—but—but—I don't pay any visits now."

"It's a shame you don't—a woman like you. Mrs. Thorndyke is charming, but not so charming as you. And I lay claim to great nobility of soul when I praise Mrs. Thorndyke, or

Thorndyke either, for that matter. Mrs. Thorndyke has no use for me or for anybody of my name, except my second daughter. And Thorndyke, although he isn't leading the pack of hounds who are baying after me to get me out of the Senate, is quietly giving them the scent. Yet I swear I admire Thorndyke—or, rather, I admire his education and training, which have made him what he is. If I had had that training—a gentleman for my father, a lady for my mother, association with the sons of gentlemen and ladies, a university education, and then had married a lady——"

Clavering got up and took a turn about the narrow room; finally he came and sat down in a chair closer to Elizabeth and continued:

"Thorndyke is one of the lawyers in the Senate who used to bother me. It seemed to me at first that every time I opened my mouth in the Senate chamber I butted into the Constitution of the United States. Either I was butting into the shalls or the shall nots, and Thorndyke always let me know it. I could get along from the first well enough in the rough and tumble of debate with men like Senator Crane, for example, a handsome fellow, from the West, too, very showy in every way, but not the man that Thorndyke is. It was the scholarly men that I was a little afraid of, I'm not ashamed to say. I am a long way off from a fool, consequently I know my own limitations, and a want of scholarship is one of those limitations."

Elizabeth listened, more and more beguiled. She could not but see a sort of self-respect in this man; he respected his own intellect because it was worth respecting, and he had very little respect for his own character and honor because he knew they were not worth respecting. As Elizabeth studied him by the mellow lamplight, while his rich voice echoed through the small room, she could not but recognize that here was a considerable man, a considerable force; and she had never known a man of this type before. She noted that he was as well groomed as the

most high-bred man she had ever known—as well as Pelham, for example. He had come into the room with ease and grace. No small tricks of manner disfigured him; he was naturally polished, and he had the gift, very rare and very dangerous, of saying what he would without giving offense, or, rather, of disarming the person who might be offended.

And in spite of his frank talking of himself Elizabeth saw in him an absence of small vanity, of restless self-love. Unconsciously she assumed an air of profound interest in what Clavering was saying—a form of flattery most insidious and effective because of its unconsciousness. Elizabeth herself, in the eighteen months of loneliness, poverty and anxiety which she had lately known, had almost lost the sweet fluency which had once distinguished her; but presently Clavering chose to make her talk, and succeeded admirably. She found herself speaking frankly about her past life and telling things she had never thought of telling a stranger; but Clavering seemed anything but a stranger. In truth, he had probed her so well that he knew much more about her than she had dreamed of revealing. When, at last, General Brandon's step was heard Elizabeth started like a guilty child; she had forgotten that her father was to return. General Brandon was delighted to see Clavering, and took a quarter of an hour to explain why he had been ten minutes late.

"I didn't expect to see any papers tonight," replied Clavering, "but I would like to talk over some things with you. Please don't go, Mrs. Darrell—what I have to say you are at perfect liberty to hear."

Elizabeth hesitated, as did General Brandon, but Clavering settled the matter by saying:

"If I am to drive you out of your sitting-room I shall feel obliged to remain away, and thereby be deprived of General Brandon's valuable services."

Elizabeth remained.

Clavering then began to give the

history from his point of view of the K. F. R. land grants. It was a powerfully interesting story, told with much dramatic force. It embraced the history of much of Clavering's life, which was in itself a long succession of uncommon episodes. It lost nothing in the telling. Then he came to the vindictive and long-continued fight made on him politically, which culminated in the bringing of these matters before a Senate committee by a powerful association of Eastern railway magnates and corporation lawyers, aided by the senators in opposition and others in his own party who, because he was not strictly amenable to party discipline, would be glad to see him driven out of the Senate. But Clavering was a fighting man, and although driven to the wall he had his back to it; he was very far from surrender, and so he said.

Elizabeth listened with breathless interest. Nothing like this had ever come in her experience before. It struck her as being so much larger and stronger than any of the struggles which she had heretofore known that it dwarfed them all. Everybody's affairs seemed small beside Clavering's. Yet she was fully conscious all the time that this was special pleading on Clavering's part. She admired the ingenuity, the finesse, the daring that Clavering had shown and was showing, but it all seemed to her as if there must be something as large and as strong on the other side. But no such idea came into General Brandon's kind, simple, wooden head.

When Clavering had finished speaking General Brandon rose and, grasping him by the hand, said solemnly:

"My dear sir, I sympathize with you profoundly. I am convinced that you have been the victim of misplaced confidence, and that this unprincipled hounding of you on the part of men who wish to rob you, not only of your property and your seat in the Senate, but of your high character and good name, is bound to come to naught. I offer you my sincere sympathy, and I assure you I place entire credence



in every word that you have told me."

This was more than Elizabeth did; and when Clavering thought of it afterward, sitting over his library fire, he laughed to himself. On the strength of it, however, he had secured opportunities of seeing Elizabeth very often, and he did not mean to let the grass grow under his feet.

## V

THE season opened with a bang on the first of December. The smart set could barely get six hours in bed from going to parties at all hours. This did not apply to Mrs. Luttrell, who, although she was out every night, did not disturb herself to appear in public until four o'clock in the afternoon. That particular form of barbaric entertainment known as a ladies' luncheon had no charms for Mrs. Luttrell, because there were no men to be found at them; for this woman who cherished with an idolatrous recollection the memory of the only man she had ever loved, and who had refused more offers of marriage than any woman of her day, frankly admitted that she couldn't enjoy anything without a masculine element in it. And men she contrived to have in plenty, with a success but little inferior to that of Ninon de L'Enclos. For that reason Richard Baskerville was not only the person Mrs. Luttrell loved best in the world, but was really her most intimate friend. There was nothing Mrs. Luttrell enjoyed so much as a midnight tête-à-tête over her bedroom fire with Baskerville, he just from his books and she just from her nightly gaiety. Mrs. Luttrell scorned a boudoir, or the modern version of it—a den. She had a huge, old-fashioned bedroom, with an ancient four-poster mahogany bed, with green silk curtains and a lace valance; and everything in the room was big and square and handsome and comfortable, like the bed. There was a large fireplace with shining brass fire-dogs, a monu-

mental brass fender, and Mrs. Luttrell frequently admitted that when she got her feet on that fender, and her dressing-gown on, she grew so communicative that she would tell the inmost secrets of her soul to the veriest stranger, if he had his feet on the fender at the same time.

It was on a night early in January that Mrs. Luttrell nabbed Baskerville at her door, as she was being let in by the sleepy black butler. Baskerville followed her upstairs, into her room, considerably turning his back while the old lady got out of her black velvet gown into her comfortable dressing-gown—an operation she performed without the least regard for his presence. Then when her delicate, high-bred feet were on the fender before the glowing wood fire she said:

"Now you can turn around—and I'm a great deal more clothed than the women you take down to dinner or dance with at balls."

"I don't dance at a great many balls. Let me see—I haven't danced for——"

"Oh, I know. Well, I'm just from a dinner at Secretary Slater's, where that ridiculous little Mrs. Hill-Smith, his daughter, was in great feather, and also the Baldwin girl and Anne Clavering."

"You ought to beg Miss Clavering's pardon for bracketing her with Mrs. Hill-Smith and Eleanor Baldwin."

"My dear boy, it would make you die laughing to see the patronizing air Mrs. Hill-Smith and Eleanor Baldwin put on with Anne Clavering. As the Slater family is at least forty years old and the Brentwood-Baldwins quite twenty years old, they regard the Claverings, who have come up within the last six years, very much as the old French nobility regarded the *bourgeoisie*. But I think Anne Clavering is a match for them. Indeed, she proved herself a match for a much more considerable antagonist—that is, myself—this very night."

"Have you been impertinent to Miss Clavering?"

"Well, Richard, my dear boy, I am



afraid I have been. But it was all the fault of those two foolish creatures, Mrs. Hill-Smith and Eleanor Baldwin. It was in this way. The gentlemen"—Mrs. Luttrell still used this antique word—"the gentlemen had come into the drawing-room after dinner—very prim and proper they were after their cigarettes and two glasses of hock. In my time, when the gentlemen came in after dinner they were always as merry as lords and delightfully free. I have been slapped on the back by Daniel Webster at a dinner, when I was sixteen years old. But nothing so agreeable happens now—and there aren't any Daniel Websters, either. Well, when I was talking to that ridiculous Mrs. Hill-Smith something unluckily started me off upon the new people in Washington—Mrs. Hill-Smith, you know, assumes that she has sixteen quarterings, so she has to grin and bear it when I begin telling about people, and I always say to her, 'You and I, Mrs. Hill-Smith, who knew some people before 1860.' Somebody was speaking about Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner's private chaplain—that woman has added much to the gaiety of nations. There's a story going around that she had a love of a fight over it, not only with the bishop, but with the bishop's wife, and I was giving a very amusing account of it when Anne Clavering quietly remarked she happened to know that Mrs. Skinner had not spoken of it yet to the bishop. Of course this spoiled my story, and I was a little cross about it. Judge Woodford was present, and he told a pleasant little tale about my grandfather having been very cross on one occasion, and having pulled somebody's nose, and I said my crossness was a case of atavism on my part. And so it was turned into a joke. When we were leaving I was sorry I had been short with Anne Clavering, so I went up and asked her to come and see me on my next day at home—and to pour tea for me—that I still held to the good old fashion of keeping a day at home and seeing my friends. And what do you think she

said? She was very sorry, but she had an attack of atavism, too—her grandfather wasn't used to afternoon tea and she had never acquired any real taste for it!"

Baskerville laughed delightedly.

"Oh, it wasn't so clever, after all," said Mrs. Luttrell, smiling with that unshakable good humor which was the most exasperating thing on earth to all her enemies and her friends alike. "It is just because you're in love with Anne Clavering, and I think she likes you pretty well, too."

Baskerville sat up then, sobered in an instant. What Mrs. Luttrell knew or suspected all Washington would shortly know.

"Why do you say that?" he asked quietly.

"Because I think it—that's why. It's one of the strangest things in the world that people in love think all the rest of the world blind and deaf. And a woman lets her secret out just as readily as a man. I say Anne Clavering likes you; I don't say she is pining and can't eat and sleep for you, but I do say she likes you, though. And I feel sorry for the girl—such a family! You ought to see how that divorcée, Mrs. Denman, goes on with Count von Kappf, who, I believe, has been sent over here by a syndicate to marry an American heiress. Nobody knows what Anne Clavering has to suffer for the conduct of that sister of hers."

"And you, who call yourself a Christian, had to add to Miss Clavering's mortification."

"Oh, it was only a trifle, and she came out ahead."

"Anyhow, you shall apologize to her. Do you understand me, Sara Luttrell? You shall apologize, and before me, too."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Luttrell, unabashed. "The first time I catch you and Anne Clavering together I'll apologize."

Baskerville sat silent for awhile as Mrs. Luttrell luxuriously toasted her toes. Presently he said:

"So people are kind enough to say that I am in love with Miss Clavering?"

"Yes, indeed. People are always kind enough to say things—and a great many people are saying that you are in love with her. You haven't escaped notice as much as you thought."

"I don't desire to escape notice. And I only hope enough people will say it, so it will get to Miss Clavering's ears. Then she may not be so surprised as to throw me over when—when—the opportunity comes. I may be a good many sorts of a blamed fool, Sara, but I am not such a fool as to be anything but flattered when my name is associated with Miss Clavering's."

"Very decently said. But how are you going to manage about this senatorial investigation—trying to ruin the father as a preliminary to marrying the daughter?"

Baskerville grew grave at once. The investigation was on in earnest. The committee which had been appointed before the adjournment of Congress had begun its sittings directly upon the meeting of Congress, and Baskerville had at once come into prominence as one of the representatives of the Civil Service League. The question of Clavering's culpability with regard to the land grants was complicated with the open barter and sale of Federal offices, and the Civil Service League had taken it up actively. The League was in no way bound by senatorial courtesy, and it had a formidable array of evidence to produce, which pointed straight to criminal as well as civil indictments. Baskerville found himself in a difficult position. He had gone too far in one direction toward exposing Senator Clavering, and his heart had carried him too far in another direction, for he was at last beginning to realize that he had fallen in love with Anne Clavering—a path upon which a strong man never halts. It is your weakling who falls halfway in love and then stops.

Mrs. Luttrell studied Baskerville keenly. Herself a sentimentalist in disguise, she loved Baskerville the better for doing what she had long dreaded—for she had a woman's jealousy of another woman's usurping the first place with this nephew-in-law, who was

son, companion and comrade in one. But at least he did not contemplate foisting a pink and white nonentity upon her; Mrs. Luttrell always declared herself afraid of silly women. She not only liked Anne Clavering, but she saw in her a large and generous spirit, who would not, by small artifices, try to come between Baskerville and Mrs. Luttrell. And the ineradicable interest which is every woman's inalienable right in a love affair was strong in Mrs. Luttrell's breast. She began to wish that Baskerville and Anne would marry, and after sitting quite silent for ten minutes, watching Baskerville's moody face, she suddenly got up, went over to him, and, smoothing the hair back from his forehead, kissed it tenderly. Two tears dropped upon his brow. Baskerville looked up and took her hands in his. He spoke no word, but he knew that the memory of the man so long dead was poignant still, and Mrs. Luttrell after a pause said, in a low voice:

"I hope Anne Clavering will love you as I loved my Richard. And if you can make her as happy as he made me— Good night—I can't bear to speak much of it, even to you."

Baskerville went across the garden to his own house, and into his library. The first thing he saw upon the big library-table was a mass of documents relating to the K. F. R. land grants. Baskerville pushed them away, and taking up a well-thumbed volume of Theocritus tried to forget himself in the pictures of the fair shining of the Sicilian sun, in the sound of the pipe of Daphnis, in the complainings of the two poor old fishermen lying by night in their wattled cabin on the sand dunes.

All was in vain. His thoughts were no sooner diverted from Anne Clavering than they turned to Clavering and his affairs. How amazing was this man who had rough-hewed his way to a high place, to enormous wealth, to great power, from which he was likely to be thrown headlong into an abyss of shame! Baskerville had very little doubt that, no matter how successful might be the suits against Clavering,

he would manage to retain great sums of money; men of the Clavering type hold on to their money more intelligently than to their supposititious honor. And finding it impossible to get away from his own thoughts, even in books which had heretofore been an unfailing sedative, Baskerville went to bed, and tossed in true lover's fashion half the remaining night before he fell into a troubled sleep, to dream of Anne Clavering.

It is said that all truly benevolent women are matchmakers, and although Mrs. Thorndyke would have indignantly denied the charge of being a matchmaker, it was an indisputable fact that within a fortnight of dining at Mrs. Luttrell's she contrived an impromptu dinner at which Anne Clavering and Baskerville were the first guests to be asked; and if they had declined it is doubtful if the dinner would have come off at all. However, they both accepted, and Mrs. Thorndyke, whether by inadvertence, as she alleged, or by design, as Thorndyke charged, had Baskerville take Anne in to dinner.

Some faint reflection of the rumor which was flying about Washington concerning Baskerville's devotion had reached Anne Clavering's ears. It gave a delightful shyness to her eyes, a warm color to her usually pale cheeks. Something in Baskerville's manner—the ingenuity with which he managed to perform every little service for her himself, conveyed subtly but plainly to Anne his interest in her. She had been deeply flattered and even made happy by Baskerville's calling at last at her house. There was every reason why he should remain away—so much Anne had admitted to herself, often, and always with a burning blush, remembering what she knew and had read about the investigation through which her father was passing. But Baskerville had come, and there must have been a powerful force, much stronger than her mother's timid invitation, to bring him. Perhaps he came because he could not stay away.

At this thought Anne, who was

sitting at her dressing-table after the dinner at the Thorndykes', caught sight of her own face in the mirror. A happy smile hovered about the corners of her mouth, her eyes became eloquent. Women, being close students of their own emotions, can always detect the dawning and the development of this silent but intense interest in a certain man, an interest which is born, grows and often dies for want of nourishment—but sometimes lives and thrives on neglect—and sometimes—oh, glorious consummation!—comes into its kingdom of love. Anne Clavering, who had passed her twenty-seventh birthday, and who, shamed and indignant at the conduct of her sisters, had maintained a haughty reserve toward men and had hitherto found it easy, knew that it was not without meaning she felt herself watching for Baskerville's entrance into a room; that she was secretly uneasy until he had placed himself beside her; that when he talked, an instant, sweet and positive mental sympathy came into being between them which seemed to bring them together without any volition on their part.

January was flying by. Anne Clavering went out quite as much as Mrs. Luttrell, but with a different motive. To Mrs. Luttrell society was a necessity, as a thing becomes after a lifetime of habitude. Anne Clavering would have liked society well enough if it had been merely a means of pleasure. But she had to maintain before the world a position which her father and her two sisters jeopardized every hour. Their place in society was by no means a fixed one. All the idle and careless people, all the worshippers of money, all those who love to eat and drink at somebody else's expense, all those who pursue pleasure without conscience or delicacy, thronged the Clavering house.

Clavering himself was seldom invited out, and did not regret it. The small talk of society bored him, and he was conscious that he did not shine unless he had the centre of the stage. Occasionally he met a man who interested

him, and semi-occasionally a woman who did the same. But no woman had ever interested him as much as Elizabeth Darrell. He was amazed himself at the power she had of drawing him to her; for, under the specious pretense of getting information from General Brandon concerning the K. F. R. land grants, Clavering soon managed to spend two or three evenings a week in Elizabeth's company. He speedily found out General Brandon's ways—his hour or two at the club in the evening, his visits to his old friends, all of which were clock-like in their regularity. On these evenings, when General Brandon returned to meet an appointment, Clavering would invariably be found established in the study. Any other man in the world but General Brandon would have had his suspicions aroused, but the general was born to be hoodwinked. His chivalric honor, his limpidness of character, his entire innocence were strong forces, as all these things are. He radiated good influences upon honest men, and gave active encouragement to every rogue of every sort who had dealings with him.

Elizabeth Darrell, however, was not so simple as her father. After that first evening she saw that Clavering was determined to secure her society. She wondered at herself for submitting to it, but in truth it would have been more remarkable if she had not done so. The extreme dullness of her life made almost any companionship a resource, and Clavering had certain fascinating qualities which were very obvious. Without making himself the hero of his own recitals, he gave the most vivid and interesting pictures of life on the wide Wyoming ranges, on the Staked Plains, in California mining camps, amid the boulders of the Yellowstone. Elizabeth listened under a kind of bewitchment, while Clavering, in his rich voice, told the story of those years—a story pulsing with movement, brilliant with adventure, with life and death at issue every moment. She began to understand this man's power over men and to recognize a kind of compulsion he exercised over

her. She might have remained out of the study, where with a map spread out, to amuse General Brandon, Clavering talked to him and at Elizabeth. She was present not only because she wished to be, but she recognized distinctly that she also came because Clavering wished her to come. Especially was this true with regard to those odd half-hours which she spent with Clavering alone. Once she went out of the room when Serena brought Clavering's card up. In a minute or two Serena came with a message:

"De gent'mun seh he mus' see you, Miss 'Liz'beth,' bout some dem papers outen de gin'l's trunk."

And Elizabeth, obeying this strange compulsion, went back into the room, and saw Clavering's eyes light up at the sight of her.

That he was deeply and even desperately in love with her from the start there could be no question to any woman, and least of all to a woman so clever as Elizabeth Darrell. She received a profound shock when this was quickly revealed to her, not by any explicit word of Clavering's, but by all his words, his looks, his course of conduct. He knew too much to venture to make open love to Elizabeth, and in other ways she made him keep his distance in a manner which Clavering had never experienced in his life before. He would no more have dared the smallest personal liberty with Elizabeth Darrell than he would have ventured to put a stick of dynamite into the fire. He had never really been afraid of any woman before. He realized fully the difficulties which beset him when he thought of his chances of making Elizabeth his wife. He could manage a divorce from his present wife in a way not known by the poor soul herself, or by Anne, or by anyone else in the world except Clavering. That once accomplished, though, Elizabeth remained still to be won. She probably inherited the Southern prejudice against divorce, and it might not be easy to overcome it. And there was General Brandon to be considered. Clavering, studying that honest, simple, hand-



some face across the table from him, bent earnestly over the ridiculous maps and useless memoranda, remembered that the general still cherished an ancient pair of dueling pistols, which he had inherited from his grandfather. He had taken these antique shooting-irons out of the old *escritoire* in the corner and had shown them, not without pride and reverence, to Clavering, saying solemnly:

"These weapons, my dear sir, have never been used since my grandfather purchased them in 1804, when he unfortunately became involved in a dispute concerning politics with a gentleman of the highest character in Virginia. They had a hostile meeting and shots were exchanged, but no blood was spilled. I am sincerely glad that the old practice of dueling over trifles is gone never to return. But there is one class of cases left in which a gentleman has but one resource—the duello. That is, when the honor of the ladies of his family is impugned. In most instances the transgressor should be shot down like a dog. But there are other cases when, owing to imprudence on the lady's part, the code must be invoked. Thank God, the honor of Southern women is safe in their own keeping. But behind her, every woman, sir, of every country, should have the protection of a man with arms in his hands, if need be. I am aware that my ideas are antiquated; but I have always held them and I always shall."

Clavering listened to this without a smile. Nothing would be more likely, if he should betray his design toward Elizabeth, than that this soft-voiced, gullible, guileless old Don Quixote would level a loaded pistol at him and eventually land him at the undertaker's. These, however, were but obstacles; and obstacles, in Clavering's lexicon, were things to be overcome.

In the narrowness and dulness of her life, Elizabeth naturally thought much of Clavering. If she had been asked at any moment whether she would marry him, should he get a divorce, she would have instantly an-

swered no. But she had seen enough of the great, self-indulgent world to know that divorce and remarriage are by no means the impossible and unheard of things which simple people in staid communities think they are.

She began to speculate idly, in her lonely afternoon walks and in the evenings when Clavering did not come, as to what would happen if she should marry Clavering. Whenever she caught herself at this she would recoil from the idea in horror. But it returned. Pelham's conduct had shattered all her ideals of man's love. If he could act as he had done, where was the difference between the love of the best and the worst of men? And this bitterness toward Pelham was much increased by the receipt of a letter from Mr. Macbean, the solicitor, more hard, more peremptory, more insulting than any he had yet written her. There had been no trouble in finding Elizabeth's whereabouts, for although she had not thought fit to notify Macbean of her leaving England, it was known that she had returned to America, and Macbean's letter reached her promptly. In it threats of legal proceedings were repeated, with an earnestness terrible to Elizabeth. This letter made her ill in bed. She called it a neuralgic headache, to soothe her father, but in truth it was a collapse from alarm and grief.

It was now the height of the season, and the whirl of gaiety and of politics made Washington seethe like a caldron. Carriages were dashing about from the early afternoon to all hours of the morning. Houses were lighted up, music resounded, men and women rushed hither and thither in the race after pleasure.

At the great white building on Capitol Hill history was being steadily and rapidly made. One subject, not wholly political, aroused deep interest on the House side as well as the Senate. The investigating committee on the K. F. R. land grants had already held several meetings, and it was known that for sound reasons of



political expedience the party in power wished the question settled at the earliest date. There was among certain senators who really did not fully understand the matter a disposition to throw Clavering overboard, like Jonah. Those senators who really understood the question reckoned Clavering to be perfectly deserving of a long term in State's prison. There was no hope of acquittal for him from the moment the whole evidence against him was known to be available; and for this nobody deserved so much credit as Richard Baskerville. He had been more than two years unraveling the tangled web of litigation, and only a very astute lawyer, with money and time to spend on it, could have done it at all. It was quite clear now, compact and available. A lesser man than Clavering would at this stage of the proceedings have resigned from the Senate and decamped.

Clavering, however, was incapable of understanding defeat, and had no more thought of surrender than the Old Guard at Waterloo. His entertainments, always lavish and frequent, grew more lavish and more frequent. Washington was not big enough to supply half the luxuries he required; New York was called upon, and Paris and Vienna, for rarities of all sorts to make the dinners and balls at the Claverings' more brilliant, more startling. Élise and Lydia reveled in this; Anne's good taste and good sense revolted against it. She read every word in the newspapers concerning her father, and she began to see that ruin and disgrace were threatening him with fearful quickness. Even Reginald Clavering, dull and self-centered, became frightened and ashamed. Not so Clavering; he was not the man to "roll darking down the torrent of his fate." He would go if he had to go, with all the splendor which unlimited money and assurance could contrive. It gave him little spells of laughter and amusement when he thought how much Washington would miss his princely

entertaining, in case he should be struck down by his enemies. If that should occur, however, he reflected that Washington was not the only city nor America even the only country in the world. He was not really much grieved at the possibility of leaving public life, although he fought with a gladiator's courage against being thrown out. He had accomplished much of what he had gone into public life for—the making of a vaster fortune than the vast one he had before. And then, that new dream which had come into his life—Elizabeth Darrell. If he should win her—as he fully intended and expected—she might not find Washington a very comfortable place of residence. He would give her a splendid hôtel in Paris, or a grand establishment in London. He would spend half the year in America, in the West, which he liked far better than the East; and the other half he could spend having what he would have called "a great big bat" in Europe. He might go into European financiering and teach those old fogies a thing or two—Clavering indulged in many Al-naschar dreams about this time.

One afternoon in the latter part of January Elizabeth went out for her usual solitary walk. It had been very cold with snow, and the thermometer that day had suddenly jumped into the sixties, bringing a damp white fog which enveloped everything.

Elizabeth walked straight down the street on which she lived, without regard to where she was going; she meant to be out of doors only for so many hours, and to find in the loneliness of a walk a change from the loneliness of the house. It was within a week of the time she had received Macbean's letter, and it lay heavy on her heart.

She had walked but a few squares when she heard a step behind her which she recognized as Clavering's. She stopped involuntarily, the red blood surging into her pale face. In a moment Clavering was by her side.

"I saw you go out, and followed you," he said.

Elizabeth made no reply. He had never joined her on the street before, although sometimes she had passed him getting in and out of his automobile or driving behind a notable pair of sorrels. But this time he had not only joined her—he had followed her. Elizabeth's sudden flushing was by no means lost on Clavering.

They walked on due east through the mist which enveloped all things, the snow still piled in drifts along the edges of the streets. They spoke little, but Elizabeth felt instinctively that Clavering had something of consequence to say to her when they got into the unfamiliar part of the town, where he could be certain of being unobserved.

The street, which had been fashionable as far as Sixteenth street, grew semi-fashionable, and then became a region of lodging-houses, places with dressmakers' signs, and an occasional small shop. Then, growing more and more remote, it became a street of comfortable, quiet houses, tenanted by people to whom the West End of Washington mattered as little as the West End of London. By that time they had gone a mile. They came to one of those small triangular parks which abound in Washington, where there are seats under the trees and asphalt walks winding in and out of shrubbery.

Elizabeth, under the spell of compulsion which Clavering had cast upon her, made no objection to entering the park with him. Usually it was completely open to observation, but now the soft and clinging fog drew a misty curtain between the little park and the world. Clavering led the way to a bench among a clump of evergreens, and Elizabeth, without a protest, sat down upon the bench, the senator at her side.

"There are places within half a mile of everywhere in this town," he said, "where one can be as secure from observation of the people one knows as if it were Bagdad. And, if I had designed this afternoon for meeting you and talking confidentially with you,

nothing could have been better. The people who live in these houses seem always to be asleep or dead, and if they knew our names they couldn't recognize us ten feet off. Now," he continued, "tell me what is troubling you—for I have seen ever since that first glimpse of you that something is preying upon you."

Elizabeth remained silent.

"What is it?" asked Clavering again, with authority in his voice. And Elizabeth, still with that strange feeling of being obliged to do what Clavering required, told him the whole story of the necklace.

Clavering listened attentively. Elizabeth had tried to keep out of it the personal note—the shame and disappointment and resentment she felt at Pelham's conduct; but she was dealing with a very astute man, who read her with extraordinary keenness, and who saw the good policy, from his own point of view, of still further embittering her feelings toward Pelham.

"I should say that fellow Pelham ought to have shown you a little more consideration, especially as you say he inherited everything."

"Yes."

"A woman, standing alone, is almost bound to fall in with just such brutes as Pelham and that Scotch solicitor."

Elizabeth winced at hearing Pelham called a brute—it was almost incredible that such a word should be applied to Hugh Pelham. She made no defense of him, however, and Clavering kept on.

"If the diamond broker—pawnbroker, I should call him—gave you five hundred pounds on the necklace it was probably worth fifteen hundred. However, fifteen hundred pounds is a small matter."

"It is a great deal to me, and always was, except for that short time in London when we had a good income and thought ourselves the richest people in the world," replied Elizabeth.

Clavering paused a full minute and fixed his eyes on her before he said:

"You may, if you choose, be one of the richest women in America."

Elizabeth's face had grown deathly pale. She was sensible of the dishonor of any proposal Clavering might make to her. All of the stories she had heard from the beginning about Clavering's intention to divorce his wife rushed upon her mind; all of her own vague and haunting speculations for the past few weeks. She remained silent, but every moment she grew more agitated. Clavering, too, said nothing, allowing the heaven to work.

"Of course, there is but one way to do this. I can get a divorce and then you must marry me. No doubt you have a lot of unpractical ideas about divorce, but let me tell you, when a man and a woman are indispensable to each other—as you are to me—what does anything on earth matter?"

No one listening to Clavering's cool and measured tones would have surmised what he was proposing to Elizabeth, nor did he attempt the smallest endearment, free as they were from observation, for the fog grew denser every moment and the little park was wholly deserted except for themselves.

At this Elizabeth attempted some faint protest, which went unheeded by Clavering, who spoke again.

"People call me a successful man. So I am, with money, politics, cards and horses. But I have had no luck with women. First, I married before I was twenty-one—cursed folly that it was! You have seen my wife—I'll say no more. Then, my two elder daughters—well, they are like me in some ways—that's enough. Elise has been through the divorce court. It cost me something like fifty thousand dollars to keep the truth about her from coming out. Lydia will go the same way. My best plan with them is to marry them to men who will get the upper hand of them—keep a tight rein over them. So far, I haven't succeeded—and I am seriously considering giving them each a handsome fortune, marrying them to foreigners and getting them out of the country."

Elizabeth's pale face had grown red while Clavering was speaking. He was close enough to see it, even by the uncertain light that penetrated the mist.

"You think I'm a brute, eh? No; on the contrary, I have a strong hankering after decency in my womenkind."

"Your daughter Anne—" Elizabeth spoke falteringly.

"Ah, yes! Bad luck again. Anne has twice the sense of her sisters, is really more attractive and is perfectly certain to behave herself. But she is on her mother's side, and if—or when—I do get a divorce I shall have to fight her—and she is the only one of my children whose opposition would amount to anything. You know what a Miss Nancy Reginald is."

"But—but—how can you get a divorce if Mrs. Clavering—?"

"Doesn't want it? Well, I never was properly married to her in the first place. The old lady didn't know it at the time, and I was a youngster and didn't know it, either—but our marriage wasn't regular at all. I should have got the license in Kentucky instead of in Ohio, where we crossed the river to get married. So we are not really married and never have been, according to law. When I mention the subject to Mrs. Clavering I shall offer to get the divorce; if she is contumacious I shall simply prove that we have never been married at all. That will be hard on the children, and on that account I think there is no doubt she would agree to the divorce, if it were not for Anne. Anne, however, doesn't know anything yet about the defect in the marriage, and I rather think she will back down when she finds out just where we stand."

Elizabeth listened to this with horror. But it was horror of the deed, not of the man. Clavering's calm and lucid presentation of the case, the absence of hypocrisy, his quiet determination, seemed to lift him out of the class of vulgar criminals and make him almost respectable.

And then he went on to give his side of the case, and his voice had in it a strange note of longing.

"I have before me twenty years yet, and although I am reckoned a man who can live on bonds and stocks and lawsuits and fighting other men, still I've had my dreams—I have them still. If I could find a woman who could be a wife to me, and yet could be an intellectual companion for me—that would be something that all my money hasn't brought me. Do you blame a man for longing after it? Don't you think I am more nearly human for wanting it than if I were satisfied to go on all my life as I have done for the last thirty-five years?"

"Yes."

Elizabeth spoke unwillingly, but the assent was forced out of her. And whether it was her words, his voice, always singularly captivating, his compelling glance or his powerful personality, Elizabeth began to feel a toleration, along with a reprehension of him; for Clavering, like all men, was made up of things to admire and things to abhor; only he possessed both in a stronger degree than common. He was much older than Elizabeth, but he had not lost the fire and vigor of youth.

Elizabeth's agitation had subsided somewhat, but she was still unable or unwilling to speak. The gray mist was becoming denser, and they could see the gas lamps studding the fast falling darkness like jewels; the sound of wheels and hoofs upon the asphalt was deadened by the fog and grew fainter; the street was quieter, more deserted even than Washington streets usually are. In the little park, with the masses of evergreen shrubbery around them, they were as alone, as little subject to intrusion as if they had been on a desert island. After a considerable pause Clavering spoke again.

"And a month ago I met you. Don't think people are fools who talk of love at first sight for anybody at any age, or under any circumstances. The moment my eyes fell upon you I was anxious to know you. When I

knew you I wanted to know you better. When I knew you I became willing to do anything, to jeopardize anything, in order to marry you. And I will give you a great fortune, millions of money, of which I shall get very little benefit, because you will outlive me many years and probably marry some other man and endow him, by gad, with my money. I will go anywhere you may desire to live, for I don't believe you would consent to live in Washington. You may have a splendid house in London or Paris, a great country house, a chateau, any and everywhere you like, and you may command me as no other woman has ever commanded me. Now, will you marry me after I am divorced?"

Elizabeth felt stunned. She had known from the first what was coming, but when Clavering put his wish into words it was as strange, as staggering as if the idea had never before occurred to her. The thought of committing so great a wrong upon another woman, as Clavering suggested, appalled her—a wrong so vast and far-reaching that she turned away from the contemplation of it. But she did not fly from the temptation—and the temptation which is not fled from is the conqueror.

Clavering interpreted her silence with ease. He took her hand, pulled off her glove and held her soft palm between his two strong ones. Five minutes passed; they seemed an hour to Elizabeth, dazed, frightened yet fascinated, her mind overwhelmed with what Clavering had told her, had promised her, had urged upon her. Through it all came the cry of her heart for Pelham. Had he been true to her this temptation would never have come in her way. And as he had forgotten her and had even persecuted her, what did it matter what became of her, so she had ease instead of this frightful poverty, companionship instead of this dreadful loneliness, security instead of this perpetual terror over the small and sordid matter of a few hundred pounds? Clavering was too clever a man to urge her overmuch when he saw that he had a tempter always with her in her



own self. At last, after five minutes of agitated silence, she managed to withdraw her hand and rise. Clavering, without a word, walked with her out of the little park, hailed a passing hansom in the dusk and put her in, only saying at the last:

"I will see you again as soon as possible. Meanwhile, remember you have but to say one word and all is yours."

The hansom rolled off, and Clavering, putting his hands in his pockets, walked away at a quick gait. The expression on his face was like that of a successful gladiator. It was not pleasant to see.

## VI

THE next night but one Clavering had an appointment with General Brandon at the usual hour of half-past nine. And at nine o'clock promptly he was sitting with Elizabeth in the little study, waiting for General Brandon's return.

The first thing he said to her was:

"Of course that affair about the necklace must be straightened out at once. I can cable to my London agent, and he can find out all about it and recover it, for it can be easily traced and recovered. And leave me to deal with the solicitor on the quiet."

"I hardly think you know what you are offering," replied Elizabeth, with involuntary haughtiness. "I could not accept money or services from you. It is not to be thought of for a moment."

"Then what are you going to do about it?" asked Clavering coolly, in the words of a celebrated character.

Ah, what was she going to do about it? thought poor Elizabeth. Tell her father and see him turned out of the only shelter he had for his aged head? If only she had been more experienced, had known more! She had been so very, very ignorant in those London days. If Pelham had not behaved so basely to her!

Clavering talked on, quietly assuming that he would take charge of the matter for her, but Elizabeth, after lis-

tening to him in silence and even in weakness, suddenly and impulsively rose and said:

"I desire you never to speak to me on that subject again."

Then General Brandon's step was heard upon the stair, and nothing more was said between them. Elizabeth remained in the room while Clavering was there, and he honestly thought he was progressing quite as fast as he had any right to expect.

It was now the middle of January, and the investigating committee continued to sit and the newspapers to print the proceedings. This did not tend to make it any pleasanter for Clavering's family. Anne, with a touch of her father's courage, continued to go out and to entertain, but it was with an aching heart. To add to her other anxieties, Mrs. Clavering was very ailing and unhappy. By some strange accident—for the poor lady never read the newspapers—she got an inkling that Clavering was under fire, and she often asked questions which Anne had difficulty in answering. Whatever love Mrs. Clavering had ever felt for Clavering had long ago been cast out by fear; but she had the true feminine instinct which makes a dove fierce in the presence of the despoiler of her nest.

Reginald Clavering redoubled his attention to his mother, and was of more help to Anne than she had thought possible. It had been determined, chiefly at Clavering's suggestion, that a grand musical, followed by a ball, should be given at the Clavering house on Shrove Tuesday as a wind-up to the splendid entertainments for which the house had long been noted, and the undisguised intention was to eclipse everything that had hitherto been done in Washington in the way of entertaining. Anne opposed it, but Élise and Lydia carried the day, backed up by their father.

Only Clavering suspected it was likely to be the last entertainment given there. He felt confident of knowing the decision of the committee before Shrove Tuesday, and he fully



realized the possibility that it might mean expulsion from the Senate on his record alone; as, unluckily for him, there was a very complete and authentic legal record of his doings, which Baskerville had unearthed. So far Clavering had kept out of jail, but there had been more than one true bill found against him, and even verdicts in criminal cases, which had never been enforced. He was still fighting, and meant to go down fighting, but he devoted far more thought to planning what he would do if he were compelled to leave public life than if he were permitted to stay in it. He reckoned that by expediting matters he could get the divorce granted and the decree entered by the first of June, when he would marry Elizabeth Darrell, go abroad for the summer, and then arrange his life for the future. And while he was taking it for granted that he could marry Elizabeth, and was seeing her in private two or three times a week by General Brandon's innocent connivance, Clavering had never so much as touched her hand or pressed his lips to her cheek, nor had she ever allowed him one word of acknowledged love-making. And this was a woman he was ready to dower with millions, which, as he grimly thought, a young husband, his successor, would get! Clavering concluded that some women were ungrateful. At the same time, he did not seriously doubt that he could marry Elizabeth in June.

He began to congratulate himself on his good luck in his constant presence at General Brandon's house escaping notice. No one but himself, the general and Elizabeth seemed to have any knowledge of his visits, although General Brandon, at his club, did some innocent bragging about the assistance he was giving to Senator Clavering "in the unholy warfare against a man incapable of the smallest dishonesty. Why, sir," he would say to anyone who would listen to him, "Senator Clavering has assured me, on his word of honor, that there is not one bit of truth in the shameful allegations brought against him in the public prints. Wait, how-

ever, until the senatorial committee has made its report. Then you will see Senator Clavering triumphantly vindicated; mark my words, sir—triumphantly vindicated."

Nobody but General Brandon, however, really believed this. Certainly Anne Clavering did not, and every day that she read the newspaper accounts of what had occurred and what had not occurred at the meeting of the investigating committee her heart sank lower. To keep her mother from suspecting anything Anne went through her usual course of life, but it required all her resolution to do it. Every time she entered a drawing-room she called up all her courage to meet an affront, if one should be offered her. Not one was passed upon her, but she lived in dread of it.

During this time Baskerville had gone everywhere he thought it likely that he should meet Anne Clavering, but so far he had not been fortunate. He did not repeat his visit to Clavering's house. He had doubted the propriety of his going in the first instance, and he doubted it still more as time passed on. But it did not keep him from falling deeper and deeper in love with the image of Anne Clavering in his mind.

On the Thursday which was Constance Thorndyke's day at home he felt tolerably confident that Anne Clavering would be paying her dinner call; and so on the stroke of four he presented himself, armed and equipped as the law directs, at Mrs. Luttrell's door to accompany that redoubtable person upon a round of Thursday visits.

Constance Thorndyke received them with the charming grace and cordiality which always distinguished her, and Senator Thorndyke was equally pleased to see them. He came up and established Mrs. Luttrell in a chair by the fire, with a good cup of tea and with a man on each side of her; and Mrs. Luttrell found herself as happy as it is given to mortals to be on this distressful planet. Thorndyke's conversation interested her on the one side, and Admiral Pren-

dergast on her other side resumed an intermittent flirtation with her which had gone on for not less than forty years.

Mrs. Thorndyke had never been strictly beautiful nor even remarkably pretty before her marriage, but since then she had developed a late flowering loveliness which was much more than beauty. She was happy, she loved and was beloved; she had it in her power to assist the man she loved without making him hate her; she had, in fact, all that she had ever asked of high heaven, except one thing—she was childless. But that one supreme disappointment gave to her face and to her soul a touch of softness, of resignation, that disarmed fate. With a tender feminine superstition, she believed that, this last gift having been denied her, she would be suffered to retain the happiness already hers. Thorndyke himself had to be both husband and children to her, and on him she concentrated all the love and solicitude of her nature. That he was happy there could be no doubt. In Constance he had all that he had ever wished for.

The Thorndyke house was one of the few in Washington in which Baskerville could enter with a clear conscience in the matter of duty calls. He always paid them promptly to Constance Thorndyke, and often went when there was no obligation for him to go. He had someone besides Constance Thorndyke in view, however, in paying that particular visit; it was Anne Claving whom he really came to see. Mrs. Thorndyke found means to let him know that Anne had not been there yet; and while Baskerville was taking what comfort he could out of this Anne walked into the drawing-room.

She looked pale and worn—Baskerville's keen eyes took this in at a glance; but like a sincere lover he admired her none the less for not being in a flush of spirits, and felt an increased tenderness for her. Her face grew delicately rosy when she saw who was present; and rosier still when Baskerville established her in a corner, that he might have a monopoly of her sweet company.

Bearing in mind his promise to discipline his aunt, almost the first words Baskerville said to Anne were:

"I hear my aunt was quite impertinent to you the other night, but before I slept I made her promise to apologize to you."

This was quite loud enough for Mrs. Luttrell to hear, and she promptly turned her smiling, sharp old face toward Anne.

"My dear, he did, as I am a sinner! Well, it's a great thing at my time of life to discover a new sensation, and I've found one in the act of apology. Now listen, all of you—Constance, make these people stop chattering—Jack Prendergast, be quiet, and Senator Thorndyke, stop laughing. Miss Claving, I was rather impertinent to you at Secretary Slater's the other night, but I declare, it was those two foolish women, Mrs. Hill-Smith and Eleanor Baldwin, who were really to blame. However, I think you got the better of me—ha! ha! I always liked you, and like you better for your spirit. I offer you my sincere apologies—on condition that you never again make the least objection to anything I say or do—for, look you, Sara Luttrell has been used to speaking her mind too long to change. But I apologize."

At which Admiral Prendergast remarked piously:

"'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'"

Anne rose and took Mrs. Luttrell's hand in hers.

"I'll forgive you," she said, smiling; "but don't think I am afraid of you—I like you too much for that."

"I know you're not afraid of me—you and my nephew, Richard Baskerville, are the only two creatures yet who openly defy me—and when you join forces, as you have done today, you are too strong for me."

This coupling of their names did not lose anything by Mrs. Luttrell's emphatic manner of saying it, and it deepened the color in Anne's face and brought the light to Baskerville's eyes. And, as if directly inspired by Satan, the old lady kept on:

"You ought to have seen how angry my nephew was with me when he heard of my behavior—we were having a quiet chat in my bedroom while I was undressing, and he gave me such a rating that it scandalized my maid. Oh, he took it to heart much more than you did!"

How much inadvertence and how much malice aforethought there were in this speech only Sara Luttrell knew, but it was distinctly disconcerting to Anne Clavering, and visibly shortened her visit. Mrs. Luttrell went out at the same time, and, after being helped into her big coach by Baskerville, turned to speak to him as the carriage rolled off.

"Didn't I do it handsomely? Why, he isn't here!"

And at that moment she caught sight of Baskerville sitting by Anne Clavering's side in her brougham, then whirling around the corner. Baskerville had got into his present agreeable situation by simply not waiting for an invitation, and furthermore, by saying to the footman authoritatively:

"Miss Clavering wishes to drive out Connecticut avenue until she directs you to turn."

It was all done so suddenly that Anne did not realize it until it was over; but what woman who loves is averse to having the man of her choice sitting by her side in the intimate seclusion of a brougham at dusk of a winter's evening? Baskerville, however, was there for a purpose—a purpose quickly formed but to be resolutely carried out. He said to Anne:

"I saw that my aunt's heedless words embarrassed you, and I felt sorry for you. But it was quite true—I made her promise to apologize to you; and as long as I live, as far as I have the power, I shall force everybody who injures you to make you amends."

Baskerville's eyes, fastened upon Anne, gave a deeper meaning to his words. The flush faded from Anne's cheeks, and she looked at Baskerville with troubled eyes, knowing a crisis was at hand.

"I am very bold in forcing myself on

you," he said, "but the time has come for me to speak. I have not the same chance as other men, because I can't go to your father's house. I went once, upon your mother's kind invitation, but I doubted whether I should have done so; I can only plead my desire to see you, and I feel I can't go again. You know, perhaps, that I am one of the lawyers engaged in prosecuting this investigation before the Senate. If I had known you before I began it I would never have gone into it. But, being in it, I can't honorably withdraw. Perhaps you can't forgive me for what I have done, but it has not kept me from loving you with all my soul."

Anne shrank back in the carriage. At any other time she would have heard these words with palpitating joy; and even now it opened to her a momentary glimpse of paradise. But the memory of all that was said and done about her father, the conviction of his impending disgrace, overwhelmed her. She sat silent and ashamed, longing to accept the sweetness of the love offered her, conscious of her own integrity, but with a primitive, honest pride, reluctant to give any man the dower of disgrace which she felt went with her father's daughter.

Silence on the part of the beloved usually augurs well to the lover, but when Anne's silence was accentuated by two large tears that dropped upon her cheeks Baskerville realized that they were not happy tears. He would have soothed her with a lover's tenderness, but Anne repulsed him with a strange pride.

"You are not to blame for what you have done in my father's case; but I know, as well as you do, that before this month is out my father may be a disgraced man. And although you may not believe it—you, with your generations of ladies and gentlemen behind you"—she spoke with a certain bitterness—"may not believe that the daughter of people like my father and my mother can have any pride, yet I have—whether I am entitled to it or not. I would not take a disgraced name to any man."

Baskerville's answer to this was to take her two hands in his. It became difficult for her to be haughty to a man who plainly indicated that he meant to kiss her within five minutes. And he did.

Anne's protests were not those of a woman meaning to yield; Baskerville saw that she felt a real shame, the genuine reluctance of a high and honorable spirit. But it was swept away in the torrent of a sincere and manly love. When they parted at Anne's door Baskerville had wrung from her the confession of her love, and they were, to each other, acknowledged lovers.

That night Anne and her father dined alone. Élise and Lydia were dining out with some of their larky friends, and Reginald was out of town. Clavering noted that Anne was rather silent. Anne, for her part, looked at her father with a kind of resentment she had often felt before. What right had he to dower his children with his own evil deeds? Why, instead of acquiring a vast fortune, which he spent on them as on himself with lavishness, should he not have given them a decent inheritance? Was it not wholly through him that she had not been able to give herself freely and joyfully to the man who loved her and whom she loved? With these thoughts on her mind she sat through the dinner, silent and distrait, but she could not wholly subdue the happiness that Baskerville had given her, even though happiness with her could never be without alloy.

When dinner was over she went up to her mother's room, and spent the rest of the evening cheering and comforting the poor soul. When Mrs. Clavering was in bed Anne came downstairs to remain until Élise and Lydia returned from their party. She sat in the library with a book in her hand, but her thoughts were on Baskerville. And, thinking of him, she fell into a sweet sleep to dream of him. When she awakened it was almost midnight, and Élise and Lydia had not returned.

To keep herself from falling asleep again she took up at random one of a

pile of periodicals on the table. It was a scurrilous newspaper which she loathed; but the first paragraph in it which, before she could lay it down, fell under her eye enchained her attention. An hour afterward Élise and Lydia came in and tiptoed softly up to their rooms; but Anne remained in the same position in the great library chair in which she had been for the last hour, still holding the newspaper in her hand.

Clavering had gone out, and after a visit to the club, which he found rather chilling, went to General Brandon's house, as usual in advance of his appointment. It seemed to Clavering on that evening as if Elizabeth relaxed a little of her reserve, which was at the same time both timid and haughty. Later he went downtown and managed to put up a tolerably stiff game of poker, and it was two o'clock in the morning before he found himself at his own door. He let himself in, and went into the vast, luxurious library, where the fire still glowed. He turned up the electric light in a superb bronze electrolier on his library-table, stirred the fire and then perceived Anne sitting in a chair drawn up to the fender.

"Why, what are you doing here?" asking Clavering good-naturedly.

"I wanted to speak to you to-night," Anne replied quietly.

"Go on," said Clavering, seating himself and lighting a cigar. "Make it short, because whenever a woman wants to 'speak' to a man it always means a row."

"I hope this does not," replied Anne.

Her father looked at her closely. She had a wearied and anxious look, which belied her youth, and she had good cause to be both wearied and anxious a good part of the time. She handed him the newspaper which battered upon scandal, and the first paragraph in it announced the forthcoming divorce of Senator Clavering and his subsequent marriage to a Chicago widow, nearly his age, with a fortune almost as large as his own.



Clavering's strong beating heart gave a jump when he began reading the paragraph, but when he found how far off the scent was the report his countenance cleared. It was as good an opportunity as he could have desired to have it out with Anne, and he was not sorry she had broached the subject.

"Well," he said, laying the paper down, "are you surprised?"

"No," replied Anne, looking at him steadily.

"Then we may proceed to discuss it," said Clavering. "I intend to provide handsomely for your mother—and I dare say she will be a hundred times happier out in Iowa among her relations and friends than she can be here."

"I hardly think my mother would look at it from that point of view," said Anne.

She controlled her agitation and her indignation admirably, and Clavering saw in her his own cool courage and resources.

"Of course my mother has felt and known for years that you had no further use for her, now that her drudgery is not necessary to you. But she is, as you know, a very religious woman. She thinks divorces are wrong, and, timid as she is, I believe she would resist a divorce. She would, I am sure, be willing to go away from you and not trouble you any more—and I would go with her. But a divorce—no. And I have the same views that she has, and would urge her to resist to the last—and she will."

She had not raised her tones at all, but Clavering understood her words perfectly. She meant to fight for her mother. He smoked quietly for several minutes, and Anne knew too much to weaken her position by repeating her protest.

Then Clavering leaned over to her and said:

"I think, when you know the circumstances, you will be more than willing to let your mother get the divorce. We were never legally married."

The blood poured into Anne's face. She rose from her chair and stood trembling with anger but also with fear.

"I don't believe—I can't believe—" She stopped, unable to go on.

"Oh, there's no reflection on your mother or on me, either. We ran away to be married—a couple of young fools under twenty-one. I got the license in Kentucky, but we crossed the Ohio River into Ohio. There we found a minister—an ignorant old fellow and a rogue besides, who didn't know enough to see that the license had no effect in Ohio. And then I found out afterward that he had been prohibited from performing marriage services because of some of his illegal doings in that line. I knew all about it within a week of the marriage, but being ignorant myself I thought the best way was to say nothing. Afterward, when I came to man's estate, I still thought it best to keep it quiet for the sake of you children. And I am willing to keep it quiet now—unless you force me to disclose it. But, understand me—I mean to be divorced in order to marry a lady to whom I am much attached—not this old whitened sepulchre from Chicago"—for so Clavering alluded to the widow with millions—"but a lady without a penny. Have you any suspicion to whom I refer?"

"I have not the least suspicion of anyone," Anne replied, as haughtily as if she had all the blood of all the Howards, instead of being the nameless child she was.

Clavering was secretly surprised and relieved to know this. Then the tongue of gossip had not got hold of his attentions to Elizabeth Darrell. This was indeed rare good fortune. He spoke again.

"So now you know exactly where you stand. If you will let me have my way the thing can be managed quietly. If you oppose me you will be sorry for it."

"And you mean, if my mother doesn't consent, that you will brand us all—us, your children—as—as—I can't speak the word!"



Anne fixed a pair of blazing eyes on her father, and Clavering never felt more uncomfortable in his life. He had no shame and no remorse, but he really wished that Anne would not gaze at him with those eyes sparkling with anger and disgust.

"I think you don't exactly understand the masculine nature," he said. "I simply mean that I shall have a divorce, and if you don't choose to accept my terms—for, of course, I am dealing with you, not your mother—it will be you and not I who proclaim to the world what I have kept quiet for thirty-five years."

The interview had lasted barely ten minutes, but to Anne Clavering it seemed as if eons of time separated her from the Anne Clavering of half an hour ago. Clavering was unshaken. He had been contemplating this event in his life ever since it happened, thirty-five years before, and had reckoned himself a magnanimous man in determining not to reveal the truth about his marriage unless he was compelled to—that is to say, unless he could not get a divorce by other means. But Anne had forced his hand, as it were, so let her take the consequences. The repudiation of his wife cost Clavering not a pang. He took no thought of her patience, her years of uncomplaining work for him, her silence under his neglect and abandonment. The thought, however, that he had admitted to anyone the illegitimacy of his children gave him a certain degree of discomfort—he felt an inward shock when he spoke the words. But it was not enough to turn him from his will.

Anne sat still for so long that Clavering did not know what to make of it. She had grown very pale, and Clavering suspected that she really had not the strength to rise, which was the truth. The room was so profoundly still that when a smoldering log in the fireplace broke in two and fell apart with a shower of sparks, the slight noise made both Clavering and Anne start.

Anne rose then somewhat unsteadily. Clavering would have liked to offer his arm and to have assisted her

to her bedroom, but he was afraid. She walked out of the room without looking at him or speaking to him again. Halfway up the broad and splendid staircase he heard her stop, and, looking out of the half-open door, he saw her shadowy figure sitting on the stairs. After a few moments more she went on up, and he could hear only the faint sound of her silken skirts as she moved. Opposite her mother's door she stopped. There was no sound within and she passed on.

It was one of Elizabeth Darrell's sleepless and harassed nights. About three o'clock she rose from her bed and went to the window. In the great house opposite Clavering's library windows were lighted up, and so were the windows of Anne's boudoir. A sudden suspicion of the truth flashed into Elizabeth's mind.

"His daughter suspects something—has discovered something," she thought to herself, panting and terrified. "They have had a scene."

Elizabeth nor Clavering nor Anne had any sleep that night.

## VII

THE next day was Mrs. Luttrell's day at home, and in spite of her declared preference for small receptions, a choice little circle of friends, tea and good, plain bread and butter, she contrived to have crowds of visitors, resplendent drawing-rooms, and in the dining-room a brilliant table, glowing with flowers and sparkling with lights, whereon were served most of the kickshaws which Mrs. Luttrell had so severely animadverted on the day before.

It was a field day with Mrs. Luttrell. All the cave-dwellers and all of the smart set seemed to be in evidence at one time or another during the afternoon. The street was blocked with carriages, lackeys stood ten deep around the handsome doors, and the air fluttered with the tissue paper from the many cards that were left. The splendid and unique drawing-rooms

were at their best, and Mrs. Luttrell, standing in the centre of the middle drawing-room, dispensed flatteries to the men and civilities to the women with great gusto. Baskerville was present, doing his part as host, helping out the shy people like Eleanor Baldwin's mother, the handsome, silent Mrs. Brentwood-Baldwin, who was known to be cruelly dragooned by her up-to-date daughter. But there are not many shy people to be found in Washington. Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner was not at all shy when she came sailing in, toward six o'clock, with a very handsome young man, dressed in the height of ecclesiastical elegance. The private chaplain was, at last, an attained luxury.

"My dear Mrs. Luttrell," she said cooingly, "may I introduce you to the Reverend Father Milward of the Order of St. Hereward?"

Mrs. Luttrell's handsome mouth widened in a smile which was subject to many interpretations, and she shook hands cordially with Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner's protégé. Father Milward himself gave Mrs. Luttrell a far-away, ascetic bow, and then, turning to Baskerville, began discussing with him the status of the English education bill. Father Milward gave it as his solemn opinion that the bill did not go far enough in opposing secular education, and thought that the dissenters had been dealt with too favorably by it and under it.

Mrs. Skinner had felt a little nervous at the way her newest acquisition might be received by Mrs. Luttrell, but had determined to put a bold face upon it. And why should anybody be ashamed of achieving one's heart's desire, so long as it is respectable; and what is more respectable and likewise more *recherché*, than a domestic chaplain? And the Reverend Father Milward had been domestic chaplain to an English duke. Nor had his severance with the ducal household been anything but creditable to Father Milward, for the duke, a very unspiritual person, who kept a domestic chaplain on the same principle as he

subscribed to the county hunt, had said that he "wouldn't stand any more of Milward's religious fallals, by gad." The chaplain, therefore, had discharged the duke, for the young clergyman's fallals were honest fallals, and he was prepared to go to the stake for them. Instead of the crown of martyrdom, however, he had fallen into Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner's arms, so to speak, and he found it an ecclesiastical paradise of luxury and asceticism, God and mammon, and full of the saintliness of the world.

Before Mrs. Skinner had a chance to tell what position the Reverend Father Milward held in her family, Mrs. Luttrell said to her, aside:

"So you've got him! I thought you'd get the upper hand of the bishop. The fact is, you're cleverer than any of the Newport people I've heard of yet. They've got their tiaras and their seagoing yachts and they have the emperor to dinner, but not one of them has a private acolyte, much less a full-grown chaplain. You've done something really original this time, my dear."

Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner did not know exactly how Mrs. Luttrell meant to be taken, but smiled faintly and said:

"You can't imagine, my dear Mrs. Luttrell, the blessed privilege of having Father Milward under my roof. He has been with me a week, and every day we have had matins, compline and evensong. I have had the billiard-room turned into a chapel temporarily, and it is really sweet—but, of course, I shall have an early English chapel built at each of my houses; I have plenty of ground for a chapel at my Washington house. My servants have been most attentive at the services, and when Lionel or Harold is absent my butler, a very High Churchman, acts as clerk. It is really edifying to see and hear him. You know persons in very humble walks of life sometimes possess great graces and virtues."

"So I have heard," replied Mrs. Luttrell earnestly.

"I am determined to take Father Milward everywhere with me—I want his holy influence to be shed in the best society. It is beautiful to see him with Lionel and Harold. I hope that one or both of them will develop a vocation for the priesthood. I could do so much for them—build them beautiful churches, lovely parish houses and everything. If one of them should wish to organize a brotherhood in America, as you once suggested, I would build a beautiful brotherhood house at my place on the Hudson. To give to the Church is such a privilege, and to give to these beautiful and poetic orders which our beloved Mother Church in England is organizing has a peculiar charm for me."

"I see it has," answered Mrs. Luttrell; "and if you have everything else you want, why not get a plain chaplain, just as the Empress Elizabeth of Russia used to get her a new lover whenever she wanted one?"

Mrs. Skinner gave a little start at this. She was a guileless woman and never knew when people were joking unless they told her so; she had never heard of the Empress Elizabeth, and moreover, she was sincerely afraid of Mrs. Luttrell. So she laughed a little and moved away, saying:

"I see Bishop Slater, the secretary's brother, across the room, and I must speak to him. I think the secretary is a dear, and so is the bishop, so nice and high in his church views."

Mrs. Luttrell turned to face an accusing mentor in Richard Baskerville, who had heard a part of the "trying out" of Mrs. James Van Cortlandt Skinner; but before he could speak he caught sight of Anne Clavering entering the wide doors.

He had not thought to see her that day, feeling that what had passed between them in the brougham would keep her away from Mrs. Luttrell's as a place where she would be certain to meet him; for Anne Clavering had all the delicate reserve which a man would wish in the woman he loves. Therefore, not expecting to see her, Baskerville had early in the day despatched

to her a basket of violets and a brief note, in which he asked permission to speak at once to her father. He had received no reply, but expected one before he slept. Anne's appearance, however, in Mrs. Luttrell's drawing-room surprised him; she evidently sought him, and this she would not be likely to do unless she were in some emergency.

To Baskerville's keen eye her face, glowing with an unusual color, her eyes, which were restlessly bright, betrayed some inward agitation. She was very beautifully dressed in velvet and furs, with more of magnificence than she usually permitted herself, and her white-gloved hand played nervously with a superb emerald pendant that hung around her neck by a jeweled chain.

Baskerville was the first person who greeted her, and Mrs. Luttrell was the next.

"This is kind of you," said the latter, all sweetness and affability. "It shows what a nice disposition you have, to come to me today, after the way my nephew made me kotow to you yesterday. Richard, give Miss Clavering a cup of tea."

Baskerville escorted Anne through the splendid suite of rooms, each speaking right and left and being stopped often to exchange a word with a friend or acquaintance. People smiled after the pair of them, as they do after a pair of suspected lovers.

When they came to a high-arched lobby that led into the dining-room, Baskerville, opening a side door, partly concealed by a screen and a great group of palms, showed Anne into a little breakfast-room, which opened with glass doors on the garden. A hard coal fire burned redly in the grate and the dying sunset poured its last splendors through a huge square window. Baskerville shut the door, and Anne and himself were as much alone as if they had the whole house to themselves.

"I have practiced a gross fraud upon you about the tea," said he, smiling; "but here is a chance for a few min-

utes alone with you—a chance I shall take whenever I can get it.”

He would have taken her hand, but something in her face stopped him. She had protested and denied him the day before when he told her of his love; but it had not stood materially in his way. Now, however, he saw in an instant there was something of great import that made a barrier between them.

“I wished very much to see you alone and soon; I came here today for that purpose,” she said.

She spoke calmly, but Baskerville saw that it was with difficulty she restrained her agitation.

“Yesterday,” she went on, “I told you what I feared about my father——”

“And I told you,” Baskerville interrupted, “that I would marry you if I could, no matter who or what your father is.”

“You were most generous. But you don’t know what I know about my father—I only found it out myself last night. I had an interview with him. There was something in a newspaper about his divorcing my mother.”

“If he does, and you will marry me, I shall engage to treat your mother with the same respect and attention I should my own. Mrs. Clavering is one of the best of women, and I have the greatest regard for her.”

Anne raised to him a glorified, grateful face. The poor, despised mother, for whom she had fought and was still fighting—the helpless, unfortunate woman who seemed to be in everybody’s way except in hers—the offer of kindness and consideration went to Anne Clavering’s heart. She wished to say something in the way of thanks to Baskerville, but instead she burst into a sudden passion of tears.

Baskerville, with a lover’s ardor, would have comforted her upon his breast, but she kept him at a distance.

“No, no!” she pleaded, weeping. “Hear me out—let me tell you all.”

Baskerville, although at her side, did not, perforce, so much as touch her hand. Anne continued, strangely re-

covering her calmness as she proceeded:

“I can’t repeat all my father said—I have neither the strength nor the time now, but he told me there was an—an—invalidity about his marriage to my mother. She, poor soul, knew nothing of it, and my father said nothing of it, for—for our sakes—his children. But it was no marriage. And last night he told me plainly that if I persuaded my mother to resist the divorce he can prove that she never was—that we are——”

She stopped. Her tears had ceased to flow, her face was deathly pale; a heartbreaking composure had taken the place of her agitation. Baskerville, however, had become slightly agitated. He comprehended instantly what she meant. She was not even the legitimate child of James Clavering. Small as the credit of his name might be, it was not hers. Baskerville, as a man of honorable lineage, had a natural shrinking from ignoble birth, but it did not blind him to the inherent honor in Anne Clavering nor turn his heart away from her. He recovered his coolness in a moment or two, and was about to speak when she forestalled him hurriedly.

“So, you see, you must forget all that happened yesterday. I thank you a thousand times for—for—what you once felt for me. If things were different—if I were—but, as you see, it is quite impossible now.”

“And do you suppose,” said Baskerville, after a pause, “that I would give you up—that I could give you up? I am afraid you don’t yet know what love is.”

Their conversation had gone on in tones so low that they might have been discussing the affairs of total strangers. Baskerville made no attempt to take her hand, to beguile her with endearments. It was a moment solemn for both of them, and Baskerville spoke with the calm appeal of a noble and steadfast love. It was not the sweet seduction of passion, but the earnest claim and covenant of love upon which he relied.



Anne remained with her eyes fixed on the floor. Baskerville said no more. He scorned to plead his right, and his silence wrought for him far more than any spoken words. His manner was one of questioning reproach, a reproach most dear to a loving and high-minded woman. The meaning of it came softly but inevitably upon Anne Claving. It was no light sacrifice for a man of sensitive honor, of flawless repute, to link himself in any way with a woman dowered as Anne Claving was dowered by her father's evil-doing, but Baskerville reckoned it as nothing when weighed in the balance against his honorable love. At last the whole beauty of his conduct dawned full upon her; Baskerville knew the very instant when she grasped all that he meant. The color began to mount to her pale cheeks; she sighed deeply and raised her eyes, now softly radiant, to his face.

"You are very, very generous," she said. "It is good to have known a man so generous—and it is sweeter than I can tell you to have been loved by such a man. But I can be generous, too. It is too great a sacrifice for you. I cannot accept it."

To this Baskerville only replied:

"Tell me but this—one word will settle it forever. Do you love me?"

Anne remained silent, but the silences of a woman who loves are more eloquent than words. The next minute she was fast in Baskerville's arms, who would not let her go; and they had a foretaste of paradise, such as only those know whose love is mingled with sacrifice, which is the ultimate height of the soul's tenderness.

But their time was of necessity short, and what Anne had told Baskerville required instant consideration. When Anne would have persisted in her refusal Baskerville would not listen, but turned to the matter of her interview with Claving.

"This is a question which must be met at once, because I believe your father quite capable of carrying out his threat. And your mother must be the first one to be considered. What do you think she would wish?"

It was the first time in her life that Anne Claving had ever heard anyone say that her mother was to be considered at all. The great wave of gratitude surged up again in her heart—the poor, helpless, ignorant, loving mother, who had no friend but her—and Baskerville. She looked at him with eyes shining and brimming and laid a timid, tender hand upon his shoulder.

"I ought not to accept your love—but——"

"You can't prevent it," replied Baskerville.

"Then, if gratitude——"

But when lovers talk of gratitude it means more kisses.

The pale dusk of winter now filled the room, and there was no light except the red glow of the fire. Baskerville would have asked nothing better in life than an hour in that quiet, twilight room, nor would Anne either; but, woman-like, Anne remembered that there were some other persons in the world besides themselves, and made as if to go; nor would she heed Baskerville's pleadings to remain longer. As they reached the door Baskerville said:

"Think over what you wish me to do, and write me when you determine. Of course I must see your father immediately. And we must take my aunt into our confidence, for it is through her that we must meet."

Poor Anne had not had much time for that sweet trifling which is the joy of lovers, but at the idea of Mrs. Luttrell being taken into their confidence a faint smile came to her quivering lips.

"The whole town will know all about it."

"No—I can frighten my aunt—and she sha'n't tell until we are ready."

Anne's cheeks were flaming, and she said, as all women do who have to face inspection directly after a love scene:

"If I could but get away without being seen."

"It is easy enough; this glass door opens."

Baskerville led her through the glass door into the garden and around to the front of the house, where in the throng of arriving and departing vis-

itors not even the lynx-eyed Jeems Yellowplush who opened the brougham door suspected that Miss Clavering had not walked straight from Mrs. Luttrell's drawing-room.

Anne lay back in the carriage, lost in a dream of love and gratitude. All her life long she had fought alone and single-handed for the poor, oppressed mother. She knew perfectly well all her mother's ignorance, her awkward manners, but Anne knew also the patience, the goodness, the forgiving and unselfish nature which lay under that unpromising exterior. Not one point of Baskerville's conduct was lost on Anne Clavering; and if love and gratitude could repay him she meant that he should be repaid. And in the coming catastrophes she would have Baskerville's strong arm and masculine good sense to depend upon. She had read the newspapers attentively, and she believed that her father and his associates would be found guilty of all that was alleged against them; and she knew that the divorce was a fixed thing, not to be altered by anybody.

That of itself might be expected, in the ordinary course, to exile the family from Washington, but Anne doubted it. Elise and Lydia would not have delicacy enough to go away if they wished to remain; and their fondness for the smaller fry of the diplomatic corps was quite strong enough to keep them in Washington when it would be better for them to live elsewhere. Reginald, in spite of his weakness and narrowness, had a sense of dignity that would make him keep out of the public eye.

For herself, Anne had determined, before her interview with Baskerville, that a quiet home in the little Iowa town where her mother was born and bred would be the place for her mother and herself; and she had thought with calm resignation of the change in her life from the gaiety and brilliance of Washington to the quiet seclusion of a country town. It would not be all loss, however, for her path in Washington had not been entirely roses.

Washington is a place of great and varied interests, where one may live any sort of life desired; and it is not easy to adapt those who have lived there to any other spot in America. But now these words of Richard Baskerville's, his manly, compelling love, had altered all that for her. She felt it to be her destiny—her happy destiny—to live with him in Washington. His name and high reputation would protect her. She would not ask of him to have her mother always with her—although a more submissive and unobtrusive creature never lived than Mrs. Clavering. It would be enough if she could pass a part of the year with Anne, while Reginald took care of her the other part, and both of them would vie with each other in doing their duty. Her heart swelled whenever she thought of the consideration Baskerville had shown toward Mrs. Clavering; it would make the poor woman happy to know it, for this woman, used to the bread of humiliation, keenly felt the smallest attention paid her. And then Anne fell into a sweet dream of delight and was happy in spite of herself. She came down from heaven only when the carriage stopped in front of the great stone house of Senator Clavering.

At the same hour Mrs. Luttrell sat before the fire in the great empty drawing-room, from which the guests had just departed. Mrs. Luttrell was burning with curiosity to know what had become of Baskerville and Anne Clavering when they disappeared so mysteriously—for Baskerville had not returned, either. The fact is, while Anne was lost in a soft ecstasy, Baskerville, smoking furiously at a big black cigar, was walking aimlessly about the streets, his heart beating high. He looked at his watch; it was seven o'clock, and it occurred to him it was time to go back to Mrs. Luttrell and make provision for his future meetings with Anne Clavering and, possibly, their marriage from Mrs. Luttrell's house, if circumstances should follow

as he expected. When he walked in, Mrs. Luttrell's greeting was:

"Where's Anne Clavering?"

"Safe at home, I trust," replied Baskerville, throwing the end of his cigar into the fire.

"And what became of you, pray, when you two went prancing off, and never came back?"

"I took Miss Clavering into the morning-room."

"You did, eh?"

"I did."

"And what happened in the morning-room?"

"I decline to state—except that Miss Clavering and I are to be married—perhaps in this house. Senator Clavering, you know, and I are at feud, and the coming revelations about him make it very likely that he won't have a house here very long"—Baskerville had in mind Clavering's divorce—"and our meetings—Miss Clavering's and mine—are to take place under your roof, with yourself to play gooseberry. Even if you are due at the biggest dinner going at the house of the smartest of the smart and the newest of the new, you shall stay here, if we have to chain you up."

"Upon my word!"

"And you are not to open your mouth to a living being about what I am telling you, until I give you permission. I know your idea of a secret, Sara Luttrell—it means something that is worth telling. But if you let one ray of light leak out I shall never speak to you again, and shall tell your age all over Washington."

Mrs. Luttrell looked at Baskerville with admiring eyes.

"That's the way your uncle used to talk to me. No one else in the world ever did it, except you and him."

"Now, will you obey me?"

"You are an impudent rogue. Yes, I will obey you."

"Then go to your desk this minute and write Miss Clavering a note offering the hospitality of your roof and your services as chaperon whenever she requires it; and mind you make it a very affectionate note."

Baskerville led Mrs. Luttrell to her desk, where she wrote her note.

"Will this do?" she asked, and read to him:

"DEAR ANNE CLAVERING:

"My nephew, Richard Baskerville, tells me you and he are to be married, and as he is at feud with your father he can't go to your house. Therefore you must come to mine. I need not say that my services as chaperon are at your disposal. I think you know that I am a sincere person, and when I tell you that I think Richard Baskerville would do well to marry you even if you hadn't a rag to your back you may be sure I think so. And you will do well to marry him. He is like another Richard who died long ago—the husband of my youth.

"Affectionately yours,

"SARA LUTTRELL."

"That will do," replied Baskerville, and taking Mrs. Luttrell's small white hand in his he kissed it—kissed it so with the air and look and manner of the man dead fifty years and more that Mrs. Luttrell's bright old eyes filled with sudden tears—she, the woman who was supposed to have been born and to have lived without a heart.

## VIII

ANNE CLAVERING was engaged to dine out, as usual, during the season, the evening of the afternoon when happiness had come to her. She was so agitated, so overcome with the tempests of emotions through which she had passed in the last twenty-four hours, that she longed to excuse herself from the dinner and to have a few hours of calming solitude in her own room. But she was too innately polite and considerate to slight and inconvenience her hostess, and so resolutely prepared to fulfil her engagement. She could not resist spending in her mother's room the half hour which intervened from the time she returned home until she should go to her room for a short rest and the making of her evening toilet.

Mrs. Clavering was not usually keen of apprehension, but Anne scarcely thought she could conceal from her mother's affectionate and solicitous eyes all the feelings with which she

palpitated. Mrs. Clavering loved the excuse of a trifling indisposition, that she might keep her room and be free from the necessity of seeing visitors and of being seen by the army of insubordinate foreign servants in the Clavering household. She was full of questions about Anne's afternoon at Mrs. Luttrell's, and the first question she asked was whether that nice young man, Mr. Baskerville, was there. At that Anne blushed so suddenly and vividly that it could not escape Mrs. Clavering.

"Why, Anne," she said, "I believe Mr. Baskerville must have been paying you some compliments! Anyhow, he's the nicest and politest man I've seen in Washington, and I hope, when you marry, you'll marry a man just like him. And I do hope, my dear, you won't be no old maid. Old maids don't run in my family."

This was Mrs. Clavering's guileless method of suggestive matchmaking. Anne, with a burning face, kissed her and went to her room for a little while alone in the dark with her rapture—and afterward purgatory—in being dressed to go out. She had already begun to debate whether it would be well to tell her secret to her mother at once. The poor lady was really not well, and any thought of impending change for her best beloved might well distress her. But her simple words convinced Anne that Mrs. Clavering would not be made unhappy by the news that Richard Baskerville and Anne loved each other. Rather would it rejoice her, and as there had been no time to talk seriously about the date of the marriage she need not be disturbed at the thought of an immediate separation from Anne.

All this Anne thought out while her hair was being dressed and her dainty slippers put on her feet and her Paris gown adjusted by her maid. In that little interval of solitude before, when she lay in her bed in the soft darkness, she had thought of nothing but Richard Baskerville and the touch of his lips upon hers. But with her maid's knock at the door the outer world had

entered, with all its urgent claims and insistence. But through all her perplexities still sounded the sweet refrain, "He loves me." She thought, as she fastened the string of pearls around her white neck, "The last time I wore these pearls I was not happy—and now!"

And so, on her way to the dinner and throughout it and back home again the thought of Richard Baskerville never left her; the sound of his voice in her ears, the touch of his lips upon hers, and above all the nobility of his loving her purely for herself—rare fortune for the daughter of a man so rich, even if not so wicked, as James Clavering. Anne tasted of joy for the first time and drank deep of it. She was glad to be alone with her love and her happiness, to become acquainted with it, to fondle it, to hold it close to her heart.

She was very quiet and subdued at the dinner, and by a sort of mistaken telepathy among the others present it was understood that Miss Clavering felt deeply the situation in which Senator Clavering was placed. But Anne Clavering was the happiest woman in Washington that night. Even the impending disgrace of her father, of which she was well assured, was softened and illumined by the lofty and self-sacrificing love bestowed upon her by Richard Baskerville.

When she came home, after eleven o'clock, she stopped, as she always did, at her mother's door. And Mrs. Clavering calling her softly, Anne went into the room. With her mother's hand in hers she told the story of her love and happiness.

If she had ever doubted whether it would be well to tell Mrs. Clavering, that doubt was dispelled. The poor lady wept, it is true, being tender-hearted and given to tears like the normal woman, but her tears were those of happiness.

"I've been a-wishing and a-hoping for it ever since I saw him that Sunday," said the poor soul. "I want you to have a good husband, Anne, the sort of husband my father was to my



mother; never a cross word between 'em before us children, ma always having the dinner on time and the old leather armchair Rip for pa—we didn't have but one easy-chair in the house in them days. And pa always saying ma was better looking than any one of her daughters, and kissin' her before us all on their wedding anniversary, and giving her a little present, if it wasn't no more than a neck ribbon; for they was always poor; but they loved each other, and lived as married folks ought to live together."

"If Richard and I can live like that I shouldn't mind being poor myself, dear mother, because I remember well enough when we were poor, and when you used to sew for us, and do all the rough work, and indulged us far too much—and I was happier then than I have been since—until now," Anne replied softly.

Mrs. Clavering sighed.

"All the others, except you, seems to have forgot all about it."

This was the nearest Mrs. Clavering ever came to a complaint or a reproach.

And then Anne, with loving pride, told her of Baskerville's kind words about her—of his voluntary offers of respect and attention. Mrs. Clavering, sitting up in bed, put her large, toil-worn hands to her face and wept a little.

"Did he say that, my dear, about your poor, ignorant mother? I tell you, Anne, there are some gentlemen in this world—men who feel sorry for a woman like me and treat 'em kind and right, like Mr. Baskerville does. Now, you tell him for me—because I'd never have the courage to tell him myself—that I thank him a thousand times, and he'll never be made to regret his kindness to me—and tell him anything else that would be proper to say, and especially that I ain't goin' to bother him. But I tell you, Anne, I'm very happy this night—I wouldn't have gone without knowing this for anything—not for anything."

Then the mother and daughter, woman-like, wept in each other's

arms, and were happy and comforted.

The next morning brought Anne a letter from Baskerville. Clouded, as Anne Clavering's love affair was, with many outside perplexities, restraints, shames and griefs, she did not miss all of what the French call the little flowers of love—among others the being wakened from sleep in the morning by a letter from her lover. Her first waking thought in her luxurious bedroom was that a letter from Baskerville would soon be in her hands. And when the maid entered and laid it on her pillow and departed Anne held it to her heart before breaking the seal. Then, lighting her bedside candle in the dark of the winter morning, she read her precious letter. In it Baskerville told her that he was urgently called to New York that day, but would return the next—and his first appointment after his return would be to see Senator Clavering, for they must arrange, for obvious reasons, to be married at the earliest possible moment. There were not many endearing terms in the letter—for Baskerville, like most men of fine sense and deep feeling, did not find it easy to put his love on paper; but those few words were enough—so Anne Clavering thought. And Baskerville told her that she would receive a letter from him daily, in lieu of the visit which he could not pay her at her father's house.

Baskerville returned to Washington on the following night, for a reason rare in the annals of lovers. The last meeting of the investigating committee was to be held the next day, and Baskerville, having succeeded in exposing Clavering, must be on hand to complete the work. But before doing this he had to tell Clavering of his intention to marry his daughter.

The committee met daily at eleven o'clock, but it was not yet ten o'clock on a dull, cold winter morning when Baskerville took his way to the Capitol, certain of finding Clavering at work by that hour, for the senator had most of the best habits of the best men—

among them industry, order and punctuality in a high degree.

Baskerville went straight to the committee-room set apart for Clavering, for, not being chairman of a committee, he had no right to a room. His colleagues, however, on the same principle that a condemned man is given everything he wishes to eat, supplied Clavering generously with quarters in which to prepare his alleged defense. Two of the handsomest rooms in the Senate wing were therefore set apart for him, and to these Baskerville took his way.

The messenger at the door took in his card, and he heard Clavering, who was walking up and down the floor dictating to a stenographer, say, in his agreeable voice:

"Show the gentleman into the room at once."

Baskerville entered, and Clavering greeted him politely and even cordially. He did not, however, offer to shake hands with Baskerville, who had purposely encumbered himself with his hat and coat, so the avoidance on the part of each was cleverly disguised.

"Pray excuse me for calling so early, senator," said Baskerville composedly, "but may I have a word in private with you?"

Clavering was infinitely surprised, but he at once answered coolly:

"Certainly. If you will go with me into the next room—it is my colleague's committee-room, but there is no meeting of the committee today, so he allows me the privilege of seeing people there when it is vacant—you see, I am snowed under here"; which was true. The masses of books, papers, typewriters' and stenographers' desks filled the room in an uncomfortable degree.

Clavering led the way into the next room. It was large and luxuriously furnished with all the elegancies with which legislators love to surround themselves. He offered Baskerville one of the large leather chairs in front of the blazing fire, took another one himself and fixed his bright, dark eyes

on Baskerville, who took the advice of old Horace and plunged at once into his subject.

"I presume that what I have to tell you will surprise you, senator—and no doubt displease you. I have asked your daughter, Miss Anne Clavering, to marry me, and she has been good enough to consent. And I feel it due to you, of course, to inform you at the earliest moment."

Clavering was secretly astounded. No such complication had dawned upon him. He knew, of course, that Anne and Baskerville were acquainted and met often in society; he had by no means forgotten that solitary visit of Baskerville's, but attached no particular meaning to it. His own pressing affairs, both of the heart and the pocket, had engrossed him so that he had given very little thought to anything else. But it was far from James Clavering to show himself disconcerted in any man's presence, least of all in an enemy's presence. His mind, which worked as rapidly as powerfully, grasped in an instant that this was really a stroke of good fortune for Anne. He knew too much of human nature to suppose that it counted for anything with him. Men like Baskerville do not change their characters or their principles by falling in love. Baskerville might possibly have altered his methods in the investigation, but this happened to be the very last day of it, and things had gone too far to be transformed at this stage of the game. However, it gave Clavering a species of intense inward amusement to find himself in a position to assume a paternal air to Baskerville. After a moment, therefore, he said, with a manner of the utmost geniality:

"Displease me, did you say? Nothing would please me better. Anne is by long odds the best of my children. She deserves a good husband, and I need not say that your high reputation and admirable character are thoroughly well known to me as to all the world."

All interviews with prospective fa-

thers-in-law are embarrassing, but perhaps no man was ever more embarrassingly placed than Baskerville at that moment. He could not but admire Clavering's astuteness, which made it necessary for Baskerville to explain that while seeking to marry Clavering's daughter he would by no means be understood as countenancing Clavering.

Baskerville colored slightly, and paused. Clavering was entirely at ease, and was enjoying the humor of the situation to the full. It is a rare treat to be enabled to act the benevolent father-in-law, anxious only for the welfare of his child, to a man who has been trying for two years to railroad the prospective father-in-law into State's prison.

"I think, senator," said Baskerville after a moment, "that we needn't beat about the bush. My course in this investigation has shown from the beginning my views on the case. They are not favorable to you. I have no right to expect your approval, but Miss Clavering is of age and can make her own choice. She has made it, and I have no intention of giving her time to back out of it. It is, however, due to you as her father that I should speak to you of certain matters—my means, for example. I can't give your daughter the luxuries—I may say the magnificence, with which you have surrounded her, but I can give her all that a gentlewoman requires. She does not ask for more."

Clavering stroked his chin meditatively, and with a gleam of acute satisfaction in his eye looked at Baskerville, uncomfortable but resolute, before him.

"My dear boy," said he, "I've given my consent already, and I rather think, with such a pair as you and my daughter Anne, it wouldn't do much good to withhold it."

Baskerville could have brained him with pleasure for that "My dear boy," but he only said:

"Quite right, senator. I also ask the privilege of speaking to Mrs. Clavering."

"Mrs. Clavering is very ailing—hasn't been out of her room for a week. But she's the last person in the world likely to oppose Anne."

"I shall try to persuade Miss Clavering to have our marriage take place very shortly," said Baskerville presently.

"Certainly; as soon as you like."

Clavering sat back in his chair smiling. Never was there so obliging a father-in-law.

Baskerville rose. The interview had lasted barely five minutes.

"Thank you very much for your acquiescence. Good morning," said the prospective bridegroom, bowing himself out. Not one word had been said about any fortune that Anne might have, nor had Baskerville touched Clavering's hand.

The senator went back to his stenographers. He was thoughtful, and did not get into the full swing of his work for at least fifteen minutes. He felt a kind of envy of Richard Baskerville, who had no investigations to face and never would have. He had no divorce problem in hand and never would have. His love was not of the sort which had to be forced upon a woman and the woman coerced and overborne and almost menaced into accepting it. On the whole, Clavering concluded, looking back upon a long career of successful villainy, that if he had his life to live over again he would live more respectably.

That day the last meeting of the committee was held, and within an hour the two men, Baskerville and Clavering, faced each other in the committee-room, each a fighting man and fighting with all his strength. Baskerville took no part in the oral arguments, but, sitting at one end of the long table in the luxurious, mahogany-furnished and crimson-curtained committee-room, he supplied data, facts and memoranda which proved Clavering to have been a thief and a perjurer.

The committee-room was only moderately full. The hearings had been open, but the crush had been so great that it was decided to exclude all ex-

cept those who were directly interested in the hearing, and those lucky enough to get cards of admission. It was an eager and even a sympathetic crowd. The same personal charm which had been a great factor in Clavering's success was still his. As he sat back, his leonine face and head outlined against the crimson wall behind him, his eyes full of the light of courage, cool, resolute and smiling, it was impossible not to admire him. He had no great virtues, but he had certain great qualities.

As the hearing proceeded Clavering's case grew blacker. Against some of the most damning facts he had some strong perjured evidence, but the perjurers were exposed with the evidence. Against all, he had his own strenuous denial of everything and the call for proof. But proof was forthcoming at every point. And it was all Richard Baskerville's handiwork. Clavering knew this so well that although perfectly alert as to the statements made by the keen-eyed, sharp-witted lawyers from New York, he kept his eyes fixed on Baskerville, who was handing out paper after paper and making whispered explanations—who was, in short, the arsenal for the weapons so mercilessly used against Clavering.

The two men, engaged in this deadly and tremendous strife, which involved not only millions of money and a seat in the United States Senate, but also the characters and souls of men, eyed each other with a certain respect. It was no man of ordinary mold whom Baskerville had sought to destroy, and that Clavering would be destroyed there was now no reasonable doubt. This last day's work meant expulsion from the Senate—a disgrace so huge, so far-reaching, that it was worse than sentencing a man to death. Apart from the degree of honesty in Clavering's own party, it was perfectly well understood that no party would dare to go before the country assuming the burden of the gigantic frauds of which he was being convicted. And it was due to Baskerville that the evidence to convict had been found. All that the other lawyers had done was insig-

nificant beside the two years of patient research, the disentangling of a thousand complicated legal threads, which was Baskerville's work. Some of the evidence he presented had been collected in the wildest parts of the West and South at the imminent risk of his life; all of it had required vast labor and learning. Being a natural lover of fighting Baskerville, in the beginning, had taken a purely human interest in tracking this man down and had thought himself engaged in a righteous work in driving him out of public life. He still knew he was right in doing this, but it had long since become a painful and irksome task to him. He had come to love this man's daughter, of all the women in the world, to love her so well and to confide in her so truly that not even her parentage could keep him from marrying her. But he knew that he was stabbing her to the heart. She had forgiven him in advance; like him, love and sacrifice had asserted their rights and reigned in their kingdom, but that she must suffer a cruel abasement for her father's iniquities Baskerville knew. And with this knowledge nothing but his sense of duty and honor kept him at his post.

The committee sat from eleven in the morning until two in the afternoon. Then, after a short adjournment, it met again. It sat again until seven, and a final adjournment was reached. When James Clavering walked out into the sharp January night, the Capitol behind him showing whitely in the gleaming of the multitudes of stars, he knew himself a beaten and ruined man—beaten and ruined by two men—James Clavering and Richard Baskerville.

Baskerville determined to walk the long stretch between the Capitol and his own house; he wanted the fresh air and the solitude in order to recover himself, for he, too, had been under a terrific strain. As he walked rapidly down the hill Clavering's carriage passed him—the same brougham in which Baskerville had told Anne Clavering of his love. An electric lamp



shone for a moment into the carriage, and revealed Clavering sitting upright, his head raised, his fists clenched; he was a fighting man to the last.

## IX

It was the gayest season Washington had ever known. There was a continuous round of entertaining at the White House, unofficial as well as official. The different Embassies vied with one another in the number and splendor of their festivities; and the smart set entered into a merry war among themselves as to which should throw open their doors oftenest, collect the largest number of guests, and make the most lavish and overpowering display of luxury.

The Claverings did their part, chiefly engineered by Clavering himself, and abetted by Élise and Lydia. Clavering had good reason to suspect that the report of the investigating committee would be ready within the month. It was now the middle of January. Shrove Tuesday came on the fourteenth of February, St. Valentine's Day, and this was the evening selected for the grand musical and ball which were to complete the season. Other musicals had been given in Washington, but none like this; other balls, but this was meant to surpass them all. It had theretofore been enough to get artists from the Metropolitan Opera; it remained for Clavering to import a couple of singers from Paris for the one occasion. A Hungarian band, touring America, was held over a steamer in order to come to Washington and play at the ball. The shops of Vienna were ransacked for favors for the cotillion, and the champagne to be served came from a king's cellars.

All this Anne Clavering regarded with disgust and aversion. She felt sure that her father was soon to be hurled from public life, and deservedly so. Her mother's health was giving her grave alarm. She was at all times opposed to the excesses of luxury and

fashion which delighted the pagan souls of Élise and Lydia, and now it was an additional mortification to her on Baskerville's account. He, she felt convinced, was conscious of the brazen effrontery, the shocking bad taste of it all, and considerate as he was in not speaking of it, her soul was filled with shame to suppose what he thought. She began to hate the lavish luxury in which she dwelt, and looked forward eagerly to the time when she could live modestly and quietly in a house not so grand as to excite the transports of all the society correspondents who got a sight of its stupendous splendors.

Mrs. Clavering's illness, though slight, continued, and gave Anne a very good excuse for withdrawing somewhat from general society. And it also gave her time for those charming meetings at Mrs. Luttrell's house, where she and Richard Baskerville tasted the true joy of living. Mrs. Luttrell nobly redeemed her promise, and would have sent every day for Anne to come to tea; as Mrs. Luttrell did not often dine at home without guests, the best tête-à-tête she could offer the lovers was tea in the little morning-room by the firelight. But Anne, with natural modesty, did not always accept Mrs. Luttrell's urgent invitations. When she did, however, she and Baskerville always had an enchanted half hour to themselves in the dusk, while Mrs. Luttrell considerably disappeared, to take the half hour's beauty sleep which she declared essential, during some part of every day, for the preservation of her charms.

The lovers also met more than once at the Thorndykes', at little dinners à quatre. Mrs. Thorndyke would write a note to Anne, asking her on various pleas to come and dine with Thorndyke and herself; and as soon as Anne had accepted there would be a frantic call over the telephone for Thorndyke, in which Mrs. Thorndyke would direct him at the peril of his life to go immediately in search of Baskerville, and to bring him home to dinner. And Thorndyke, like the obedient

American husband, would do as he was bidden, and produce Baskerville with great punctuality. How far Constance Thorndyke's own acute perceptions were accountable for this and how far Mrs. Luttrell's incurable propensity for taking the world into her confidence was, nobody could tell. At all events, it made four people happy; and if anything could have made Baskerville and Anne more in love with the ideal of marriage it was to see the serene happiness, the charming home life of Senator and Mrs. Thorndyke.

Baskerville had not ceased to press for an early date for his marriage, but Mrs. Clavering's indisposition and the posture of Clavering's affairs deferred the actual making of the arrangements. It was to be a very simple wedding, Anne stipulated; and Baskerville, with more than the average man's dread of a ceremony full of display, agreed promptly. Some morning, when Mrs. Clavering was well, Anne and he would be quietly married, go from the church to the train, and after a few days return to Baskerville's house. And Anne promised herself, and got Baskerville to promise her, the indulgence of a quiet domestic life—a thing she had not known since the golden shower descended upon James Clavering.

Clavering had said nothing to Anne in regard to Baskerville's interview with him, nor had the father and daughter exchanged one word with each other, beyond the ordinary civilities of life, since that midnight conversation in which Clavering had announced his intention of getting a divorce. Neither had he said anything to Mrs. Clavering, and his plans were entirely unknown to his family. By extraordinary good fortune not the smallest suspicion fell on the pale, handsome, silent Mrs. Darrell across the way, with her widow's veil thrown back from her graceful head.

In those weeks, when Anne Clavering saw as little of the world as she could, she occasionally took quiet and solitary walks—walks in which Baskerville would gladly have joined her.

But Anne, with the over-delicacy of one who might be open to the suspicion of not being delicate enough, would not agree to see him except under the chaperonage of Mrs. Luttrell. And twice in those solitary walks she met Elizabeth Darrell, also alone. Both women regarded each other curiously, meanwhile averting their eyes. Anne knew quite well who Elizabeth was, and at their second meeting, quite close to Elizabeth's door, Anne was moved by the true spirit of courtesy and neighborly kindness to speak to her. She said, with a pleasant bow and smile:

"This, I believe, is Mrs. Darrell, our neighbor, and I am Miss Clavering. I have the pleasure of knowing your father, General Brandon."

Elizabeth received this advance with such apparent haughtiness that Anne, her face flushing, made some casual remark and went into her own house. In truth, Elizabeth was frightened and surprised beyond measure, and felt herself so guilty that she knew not where to look or what to say, and literally fled from the sight of James Clavering's innocent daughter as if she had been an accusing conscience.

Meanwhile the preparations for the grand St. Valentine's musical and ball went gaily on. Clavering himself showed unwonted interest in it. He was as insensible of public approval or disapproval as any man well could be; nevertheless he hoped that the report of the investigating committee would not be made public until after the great function on Shrove Tuesday. It pleased his fancy for the spectacular to think that the last entertainment he gave in Washington—for he well knew it would be the last—should be so full of gorgeous splendor, so superbly unique that it would be remembered for a decade.

He told this to Elizabeth Darrell; for although the investigation was closed, Clavering trumped up some specious requests for more of Brandon's information and assistance on certain alleged general points, and by

this means still contrived to see Elizabeth once or twice a week.

He tried to persuade Elizabeth to come to the grand festivity, and was deeply in earnest in his effort. He counted on its effect upon her when he should tell her that she could have similar entertainments whenever she liked, in a much larger and more splendid city than Washington—London or Paris, for example.

Elizabeth, however, recoiled with something like horror from the idea of going to Clavering's house and being hospitably received by his wife and daughters, for she had reached the point when Clavering's bribes—for so his love-making might be considered—were always in her mind. At one time she would feel so oppressed with her loneliness, her poverty, her disappointments that she would be almost eager for the splendid destiny which Clavering offered her; at another time she would shrink from it with loathing.

However, Clavering's best argument—his stupendous wealth—was always, in some form, before her eyes. Every time she went out of doors or even looked out of her window she saw the evidences of Clavering's wealth—his magnificent house, his army of servants, his superb equipages, his automobiles of every description. She could not get away from it, and it made her own shabby home seem the shabbier and the narrower every day she lived in it. Moreover, she was at that dangerous age when a woman is brought face to face with her destiny; when she is forced to say good-bye to her girlhood, and to reckon upon life without first youth or first love.

And after Hugh Pelham's behavior, why should she reckon on love at all? Was there such a thing as love? He had apparently loved her with the noblest love; it had lasted many years, and finally, in a day, in an hour, for the merest paltry consideration of money, he had not only forgotten her, he had persecuted her. If it were not her fate to know the very ultimate sweetness

of love, at least she might have known its consolation.

Now that Pelham was lost to her she began to think reproachfully, as women will, of what he might have done for her. If he had been true to her—or even decent to her—she would never have been in those desperate straits in London; she would never have been in her present cruel position, for the instant her father knew of her embarrassments she knew he would sell the roof over his head to pay back the debt; and she would never have dreamed of marrying Clavering. All these troubles came from her having believed in love—and perhaps there was no such thing, after all. But in thinking of marrying Clavering and exchanging her present miserable existence for that promised dazzling London life, a shadow would fall across it—Hugh Pelham's shadow. How would she face him? How could she conceal from him that she had sold herself to this man? And how could she visit him with the scorn he deserved if she had so easily bartered herself away?

Clavering saw the conflict in Elizabeth's mind, and it gave him a species of sardonic amusement at his own expense. Here he was, ready to sacrifice so much for this woman who had nothing, who could scarcely be brought to look upon what he offered her, and who had kept him at such a distance that he had not once touched her hand in private.

He felt himself in many ways at a disadvantage with Elizabeth Darrell. He was, like all men brought up in humble surroundings, unused to clean and highly organized women, and he did not exactly know how to appeal to such women or how to classify them. One moment Elizabeth would appear to him cleverer than the cleverest man, the next he saw in her some feminine foible that made her seem like a precocious child.

Yet all the time Clavering maintained, in his quietly overbearing way, that the whole affair of the marriage was fixed; but he was not so certain

as he professed. He would talk of their plans—they would be married and go to London, and Elizabeth might have any sort of an establishment she liked. She was already well known and well connected there, and he candidly admitted to himself that it would probably be a season or two before London society would find out exactly what sort of a person he was. He warned Elizabeth not to expect any attention from the American ambassador, and was, in short, perfectly frank with her.

He saw that the idea of a life of splendor in London had its attraction for Elizabeth. She could not dare to remain in Washington, and she had no ties elsewhere in her own country. Clavering's manners, in spite of his origin and career, were admirable, and she would have no occasion to blush for him in society—a point on which well-bred women are sensitive. She knew, in externals, he would compare favorably with any of the self-made Americans who buy their way into English society. For herself, her birth and breeding lifted her far above the average titled American woman, whose papa or mama has bought her a title as they bought her a French doll in her childhood. And London was so large, and so little was really understood there of American life and manners, that Elizabeth felt they would be comparatively safe in London—if—if—

She had taken to reading the newspapers attentively, and had followed the investigation closely. She made herself some sort of a vague promise that should Clavering be exonerated she would marry him, but if he should be proved a scoundrel she would not. But she was already inwardly convinced that he was guilty.

He told her, the first time he had a chance, of Baskerville's interview with him—told it with such humor, such raciness, such enjoyment of Baskerville's uncomfortable predicament, that Elizabeth, though little given to merriment, was obliged to laugh.

"Of course," he said, "they will be

married shortly. Baskerville has a fine position here—not showy, you know, but the right sort. He has a comfortable fortune, too. Gad! at his age I would have thought myself as rich as Rockefeller if I had had as much. Now it wouldn't keep me in automobiles. I shall provide for Anne handsomely, and besides she will get everything I give her mother, which will be in itself a handsome fortune. Oh, I'm not mean about giving money to my family. Just as soon as Élise and Lydia get the cash I intend to give them, when I get the divorce, they will both be sure to marry some foreign sprig—they have a whole forest of them here and at those foreign watering-places. I shall give Reginald quite as much as he will know how to use, and that will still leave me enough to make you one of the richest women in the world."

Then he redoubled his urging that Elizabeth should come to the grand musical; but she refused his proposition with such violence that he thought it prudent to say no more about it.

General Brandon, however, had accepted with pleasure, and quite looked forward to the event. But the very day before, he came home from his office with a bad attack of rheumatism, and was forced to take to his bed. In the afternoon of the next day, while Elizabeth was sitting by her father's bedside reading to him, and occasionally giving furtive glances at the great masses of palms and magnificent flowering plants being carried into Clavering's house, a card was brought up to her. It was inscribed, "Mr. Angus Macbean."

So the solicitor had carried out his threat at last! Elizabeth's heart gave a great jump, and then seemed as if dead within her. But she maintained some outward composure, and said she would see the gentleman in a few moments; and telling General Brandon that it was an acquaintance of other days, she left the room. She went to her own room to recover herself a little, before descending to meet the man through whom Hugh Pelham had per-



secuted her ever since her husband's death.

When she entered the drawing-room Mr. Macbean rose and greeted her politely. Elizabeth answered his greeting coldly, and Macbean, who had seen several Scotch duchesses at a distance, thought he had never beheld anything quite so haughty as this American woman. She remained standing, and Mr. Macbean, perceiving she was not likely to ask him to sit, coolly took a chair, and Elizabeth, perforce, sat too.

"I have come in the interests of my client, Colonel Pelham, to endeavor to reach a basis of settlement with you, madam, concerning the matter we have been corresponding about," blandly remarked Mr. Macbean.

"So I supposed," said Elizabeth icily.

Mr. Macbean continued, still blandly:

"I may recall to you that you have persistently refused to answer my letters or to refer me to a lawyer, and as the affair involves jewels of considerable value I thought myself justified in coming to America to seek a settlement of the matter. May I inquire if you will now give me the name of your lawyer? For it would be far more to your interests—I may say it is necessary to your interests—that this matter shall be settled promptly."

These words were of vague but dreadful import to Elizabeth. She remained silent. She knew nothing of law or lawyers, and the mere thought of consulting a lawyer seemed to her to be giving away her case. There was one—yes—Richard Baskerville—the only lawyer she knew in Washington, if she might still be said to know him. She recalled having seen him twice since her return to Washington. But she had known him well in the old days. He seemed to have retained his old kindness to her; she might consult him. All this passed rapidly through her mind. What she said was in a calm voice:

"I think I need not consult any lawyer on the point of retaining my husband's gift. The pendant to the necklace was my husband's wedding present to me."

Mr. Macbean sighed patiently. He had had many dealings with lady clients, and all of them were like this, quite haughty and impossible, until they were frightened; then they would do anything that was asked of them. The only thing left, then, was to frighten Mrs. Darrell, and to give her to understand that the rights of property were the most sacred rights on earth—from the Scotch point of view.

"I think, madam, if you will kindly consent to see your solicitor—or, I believe you use the generic term in the States—your lawyer—and will afterward have him kindly accord me an interview, you will change your mind upon this matter. The necklace, without counting the additions made to it by your husband, or the pendant, which I understand is of no great value, all of which will be restored to you, is worth at least fifteen hundred pounds. Such a piece of property is not to be disposed of lightly."

So, then, being driven into a corner, helpless and alone, Elizabeth falteringly consented to consult a lawyer. Mr. Macbean left as his address a second-class hotel, and bowed himself out, promising to repeat his call as soon as he was permitted.

Had the Scotch solicitor known it, he had done more toward driving Elizabeth toward marrying Clavering than any of Clavering's offers, vows, urgings and inducements. As she stood, pale and frightened, with a wildly beating heart, her eyes fell involuntarily on the superb house opposite to her.

At that moment Clavering dashed up in a magnificent automobile, and got out. Elizabeth noticed involuntarily that he did not walk with his usually graceful and springy step, and that he leaned against one of the stone pillars of the doorway, before the ever-ready gorgeously caparisoned flunky opened the entrance door. In truth, James Clavering had in his breast pocket a type written document which acted like a drag upon his footsteps and a weight upon his shoulders.

The next moment Élise and Lydia drove up in a gem of a victoria. They

were enveloped in the costliest furs, and so were the immaculate coachman and footman. The pair of perfectly matched bay cobs were worth a fortune. The harness was gold-mounted, with the Clavering initials upon it. As the two girls got out of the victoria Elizabeth caught the gleam of a long chain dotted with diamonds around Elise's neck. Both of them seemed to radiate wealth—and there stood she, forlorn and despairing, for the lack of a few hundred pounds!

Nor was this all. Even if the value of the necklace could be raised by her father sacrificing everything he had—his interest in his mortgaged house—what might not be done to her because she could not produce the necklace itself? Clavering had told her that with money enough it could easily be traced and recovered; but that would mean more money still—and she might as well ask for a star as for any more than the small sum her father could raise. And when she thought that by saying one word she could step from this unstable, bitter and humiliating position into the very acme of luxury and all the ease of mind which money could give, it seemed to her almost a paradise. It was well for her that Clavering was not on the spot at that moment.

She went back to her father's bedside and to reading the book she had laid down. She uttered the words, but her mind was afar off. As she dwelt upon Mr. Macbean's phrases and thinly disguised threats she grew more and more panic-stricken. At last Serena brought up General Brandon's dinner, and Elizabeth went down to her own solitary meal in the dingy dining-room. Action was forced upon her; she must see a lawyer, and Richard Baskerville was her only choice. She must try to see him that very night. As she knew he would not be at the Claverings' she thought her chance for finding him at home was excellent.

When dinner was over Elizabeth gave Serena a note to take to Richard Baskerville, asking him to call that

evening to see her upon a matter of pressing importance. She put her request upon the ground of old acquaintance, coupled with present necessity. Serena returned within a half hour, with a note from Baskerville saying he would be pleased to call to see Mrs. Darrell that evening at nine o'clock.

General Brandon having been made comfortable for the night, Elizabeth descended to the drawing-room. The gas was lighted, but turned low. Elizabeth went to the window, whence she could see the Clavering house blazing with light and an army of liveried servants moving to and fro. A fraction of the cost of that one entertainment would have made her a free woman.

Shortly after nine o'clock Baskerville arrived. Like Elizabeth, he gazed with interest at the Clavering house. It was undoubtedly the last great entertainment there at which Anne would preside, and Baskerville had a conviction that it was the last entertainment the Claverings would ever give in Washington. He had private information that the committee of investigation had agreed upon its report, and he believed it would deal severely with Clavering.

He had been surprised to receive Elizabeth's note, but he recognized at once that she was in great trouble, and he had come willingly, as a gentleman should. When he saw Elizabeth he realized how great was her trouble.

Then, sitting in the dimly lighted drawing-room, Elizabeth, with many pauses and palpitations and hesitations, began her story.

Baskerville gently assisted her, and the telling of the first part was not so hard. When it came to the further history of it Elizabeth faltered, and asked anxiously:

"But wasn't the necklace mine entirely, after my husband gave it to me?"

Baskerville shook his head.

"I'm afraid not, Mrs. Darrell, and I am afraid that Major Darrell made a mistake—a perfectly natural and

excusable mistake—in thinking it was his to give to you in perpetuity. Of course I am not so well informed on these points as an English lawyer would be, but from what you tell me of the other jewels, and the course of the solicitor concerning them, I cannot but think that he knows what he is doing, and that you will have to give up the necklace, retaining, of course, your pendant, and perhaps the stones your husband bought.”

Elizabeth looked at him with wild, scared eyes; and then, bursting into tears, told him the whole story of pawning the necklace, of finding it gone, and her unwillingness to own what she had done.

Baskerville was startled, but allowed her to weep on, without trying to check her. He saw that she was in a state of trembling excitement, excessive even under the circumstances, and she must have her tears out. She had, so far, avoided mentioning Pelham’s name.

“But what of the heirs of Major Darrell? Surely, when they know how you were straitened in London after your husband’s death, and the good faith in which you pledged the necklace, they would not wish to distress you unnecessarily about it.”

Then Elizabeth was forced to speak of Pelham.

“Major Darrell’s heir is his cousin, Colonel Hugh Pelham—the man, next my husband and my father, whom I thought my truest friend. He is in West Africa now—or was, when my husband died—and I have not heard of his return to England since. But he has countenanced all this, and seems to delight in persecuting me, through this man Macbean. And it is quite useless, too, as I have no means of paying the money. I have only a small income—about a hundred pounds a year. But if my father knew of it—as he eventually must if this persecution is kept up—he will certainly sell this house—his only piece of property, and mortgaged at that— Oh, I didn’t think a man could be so cruel as Hugh Pelham has been!”

“Does Macbean claim to be acting under Colonel Pelham’s instructions?”

“Yes. In everything he writes me or says to me he uses Hugh Pelham’s name.”

“There is but one thing to do, Mrs. Darrell. I shall see Macbean tomorrow, and endeavor to see what I can do with him. If I fail with him I shall appeal to Colonel Pelham.”

“Oh, not that—not that!”

She spoke with so much of feeling, of anger, of mortification in her voice that Baskerville could not but suspect that there was something more concerning Pelham which Elizabeth had not chosen to tell him; but his duty to her as a friend and a lawyer remained the same.

“Pardon me,” he said kindly, “but I think it almost necessary to inform Colonel Pelham of the state of the case. I should not, however, do it unless you consent. But I think you will consent.”

Elizabeth grew more composed, and they talked some time longer—talked until the rolling of carriages began under the porte-cochère of the Clavering house and women, wrapped in gorgeous ball cloaks and trailing behind them rich brocades and velvets and sparkling chiffons, began to pour through the great entrance doors into the regions of light and splendor beyond. The rhythmic swell of music began to be heard—the great festivity had begun.

Both Elizabeth and Baskerville, sitting in the quiet room only a stone’s throw away, were thinking about what was going on in the great mansion across the street. Elizabeth was asking herself if, after all, there were any alternative left her but to agree to marry Clavering. One word and all her troubles and perplexities about money, which had spoiled her life from the time of her girlhood, would disappear. And if she did not marry Clavering—here her dread and apprehension became so strong that she was sickened at the contemplation.

In spite of her preoccupation with her own troubles she could not but regard

Baskerville with interest, knowing of his relations with Anne Clavering. Here was another man, like Pelham, who seemed the very mirror of manly love and courage; but perhaps he would be no better than Pelham in the long run. He might marry Anne under an impulse of generous feeling and live to repent it. Elizabeth was becoming a skeptic on the subject of man's love.

Baskerville had no suspicion that Elizabeth Darrell knew anything of his relations with Anne Clavering, nor did he connect Clavering in any way with Elizabeth. He was thinking of Anne while talking to Elizabeth, remembering how she had disliked and dreaded this great function. She was to do the honors of the occasion, Mrs. Clavering being still ailing. The town had been ringing with the coming magnificence of the festivity, but Anne had been so averse to it that Baskerville had said little to her about it. It was out of the question that he should go, and so no card had been sent him; and he agreed fully with Anne that the affair was most unfortunately conspicuous at the present time.

A silence had fallen between Baskerville and Elizabeth, while listening to the commotion outside. A sudden wild impulse came to Elizabeth to tell Baskerville, of all men, her struggles about consenting to marry Clavering without mentioning any name. Baskerville had been kind and helpful to her; he had come to her immediately at her request; and before she knew it she was saying to him, in a nervous voice:

"I could be free from all these anxieties about money—my father could end his days in ease—all, all, if I would but marry a divorced man—a man to be divorced, that is. And after all, he never was actually married—it was a mistake——"

Baskerville had been looking abstractedly out of the window at the carriages flashing past, but at this he turned quickly to Elizabeth.

"You mean Senator Clavering?"

Elizabeth sat dumb. She had

yielded to a mad impulse, and would have given a year of her life to have unsaid those words. Baskerville hesitated for a minute or two, and then rose. Elizabeth's silence, the painful flushing of her face, her whole attitude of conscious guilt, proclaimed the truth of Baskerville's surmise. He looked at her in pity and commiseration. She had just told him enough to make him understand how great the temptation was to her; and yet so far she had not yielded. But that she would yield he had not the least doubt. And what untold miseries would not she, or any woman like her, bring upon herself by marrying Clavering!

It was a question which neither one of them could discuss, and Baskerville's only words were:

"I have no right to offer you my advice, except on the point upon which you consulted me; but I beg of you to consider well what you are thinking of; you are hovering over dreadful possibilities for yourself. Good night."

He was going, but Elizabeth ran and grasped his arm.

"You won't speak of this to Miss Clavering—you must not do it—you have no right!"

Baskerville smiled rather bitterly—whether Elizabeth were afraid or ashamed he did not know—probably both.

"Certainly I shall not," he said, and to Elizabeth's ears his tone expressed the most entire contempt.

"And I haven't promised him—I haven't agreed yet," she added, tears coming into her eyes—and then Baskerville was gone.

Elizabeth sat, stunned by her own folly, and burning with shame at the scorn she fancied Baskerville had felt for her. He had been kind to her, and had agreed to do all that was possible with Macbean, but by her own act she had lost his good will and respect. Well, it was a part of the web of destiny. She was being driven to marry Clavering by every circumstance of her life—even this last. Pelham's unkindness was the beginning of it; Macbean's persecution helped it on; Gen-



eral Brandon's goodness and generosity, Baskerville's contempt for her—all urged her on; she supposed Baskerville would probably have nothing more to do with her affairs, and would leave her to face Macbean alone; and that would be the end of her resistance to Clavering.

She went up to her own room, and with a shawl huddled around her sat by the window in the dark, looking out upon the splendid scene of a great ball in a capital city. Elizabeth in the cold and darkness watched it all—watched until the ambassadors' carriages were called, followed rapidly by the other equipages which were packed in the surrounding streets for blocks. At last, after three o'clock in the morning, the trampling of horses' hoofs, the closing of carriage doors and the commotion of footmen and coachmen ceased—the great affair was over. Quickly, as in the transformation scene at a theatre, the splendid house grew dark—all except the windows of Clavering's library. They remained brilliantly lighted, long after all else in the street was dark and quiet.

Elizabeth, for some reason inexplicable to herself, remained still at her window, looking at the blaze of light from Clavering's library windows. What was keeping him up so late? Was it good news or bad? Had the report of the committee been made?

Within the library sat Clavering in his accustomed chair. In his hand he held a typewritten document of many pages, which had cost him many thousands of dollars to have purloined and copied from another one which was locked up in the safe of the secretary of the Senate. Every page of this document proclaimed in some form his guilt, and at the bottom was written in the hand of a man he knew well, and who had stolen and copied the report for him:

Resolution of expulsion will be introduced immediately after reading of report, and will pass by three-fourth majority.

And the hired thief had not played fair with him. He had discovered that

at least three newspapers had bought the stolen report, and at that very moment he knew the great presses in the newspaper offices were clanging with the story of his disgrace to be printed on the morrow.

Then there was a bunch of telegrams from his State capital. If the Senate did not vote to expel, the Legislature would request him to resign—so there was no vindication there.

To this, then, had his public career come! Clavering was not honest himself, nor did he believe in honesty in others; but he believed it possible that he might have been more secret in his evil-doing. He had thought that with money, brains and courage he could brazen anything out. But behold! he could not. He was fairly caught and exposed. Those stray words of Baskerville's uttered some months before recurred to him: "There is no real substitute for honesty."

He had heard the news on his way home that afternoon, from an out-of-town expedition. It had unnerved him for a little while; it was that which made him get out of the automobile so heavily when Elizabeth, unseen, was watching him. He had gone through the evening, however, bravely, and even cynically. Many senators had been asked to the great function; scarcely half a dozen had appeared, and all of them were inconsiderable men, dragged there by their womenkind. In the course of some hours of reflection—for Clavering could think in a crowd—a part of his indomitable courage and resource had returned. He had no fear of the criminal prosecutions which would certainly follow. William M. Tweed had been caught, but Tweed was a mere vulgar villain, and did not know when he was beaten. Clavering rapidly made up his mind that he could afford to restore eight or even ten millions of dollars to the rightful owners, and that would satisfy them; they wouldn't be likely to spend any part of it in trying to punish him.

As for any part the State and Federal Government might take he was not particularly concerned. The party had

done enough to clear its skirts by expelling him from the Senate, and if he satisfied all the claims against him nobody would have any object in entering upon a long, expensive and doubtful trial. But after paying out even ten millions of dollars he would have twice as much left, which nobody and no government could get, though it was as dishonestly made as the rest. With that much money and Elizabeth Darrell—for Elizabeth entered into all his calculations—life would still be worth living.

When the mob of gaily dressed people were gone, when the laughter and the dancing and the music and the champagne and the feasting were over, and Clavering sat in his library alone under the brilliant chandelier, he grew positively cheerful. He was not really fond of public life, and although he would have liked to get out of it more gracefully, he was not really sorry to go. He had found himself bound in a thousand conventions since he had been in Washington; he had been hampered by his family; by his wife because she was old and stupid and ignorant, by Élise and Lydia because they were so bad, by Anne and Reginald because they were so honest. It would be rather good to be free once more—free in the great, wide, untamed West, free in the vast, populous, surging cities of Europe. He would have Elizabeth with him—he did not much care for anyone else's society. She had never heard him admit his guilt, and he could easily persuade her that he was the victim of untoward circumstance.

While he was thinking these things he heard a commotion overhead. Presently the whole house was roused, and servants were running back and forth. Elizabeth Darrell, still watching at her window, saw the sudden and alarming awakening of the silent house. Mrs. Clavering had been taken violently ill. Before sunrise the poor lady was no longer in anyone's way. A few hours of stupor, a little awakening at the last, a clinging to Anne and Reginald and telling them to be good, and

Mrs. Clavering's gentle spirit was free and in peace.

When the undertaker was hanging the streamers of black upon the door-bell the morning newspaper was laid on the steps. On the first page, with great headlines, was the announcement that Senator Clavering had been found guilty of all the charges against him and that expulsion from the Senate was certain to follow. The newspaper omitted to state how the information was obtained.

## X

THE morning of Ash Wednesday dawned cold and damp and cheerless. Baskerville had heard a rumor at the club the night before that there had been a leak between the committee-room and the office of the secretary of the Senate; that the committee report had been copied and would be published in the morning. So he had the morning newspaper brought up to him. On the first page, with a huge display head, was printed the report in full, together with the recommendation of expulsion against Senator Clavering.

Baskerville immediately wrote a note to Anne Clavering asking that their engagement might be announced and also suggesting an immediate marriage. Within an hour came back an answer from Anne. In a few agitated lines she told of her mother's death. She did not ask Baskerville to come to her, but he, seeing that it was no time for small conventions, replied at once, saying that he would be at her house at twelve o'clock, and begged that she would see him.

Elizabeth Darrell was the first person outside of Clavering's family who knew that he was a free man. There had been no time to get a doctor for Mrs. Clavering, although several had been called. But when they arrived all was over. Elizabeth had seen the sudden shutting of the windows; she knew, almost to a moment, when Mrs. Clavering died.

At seven o'clock in the morning Serena, with that morbid desire to com-

municate tragic news which is the characteristic of the African, came up to Elizabeth's room full of what she had gleaned from the neighboring servants. Elizabeth listened and felt a sense of guilt enveloping her. Then, when General Brandon was dressed, he came up to her door to discuss the startling news, and his was the first card left for the Clavering family. On it the good soul had written:

With heartfelt sympathy in the overwhelming sorrow which has befallen Senator Clavering and his family.

Elizabeth remained indoors all that day. She drew her window curtains together, so that she could not see the house which might have been hers, where had lived the dead woman of whom she had considered the spoliation.

At twelve o'clock Baskerville came and was promptly admitted into the Clavering house. There had been no time to remove the festal decorations. The Moorish hall was odorous with flowers, the mantels and even the hand-rail of the staircase being banked with them. Masses of tall palms made a mysterious green light through the whole of the great suite of rooms. The ceilings were draped with greenery, and orchids and roses hung from them. The huge ballroom was just as the dancers had left it, and everywhere were flowers, palms and burnt-out candles on girandoles and candelabra. The servants, in gorgeous liveries, sat about, more asleep than awake, and over all was that solemn silence which accompanies the presence of that first and greatest of democrats. Death.

Baskerville was shown into a little morning-room on the second floor, which had belonged to the poor dead woman. It was very simply furnished and in many ways suggested Mrs. Clavering. Baskerville, remembering her untoward fate in being thrust into a position for which she was unfitted, and her genuine goodness and gentleness, felt a real regret at her death. Being a generous man, he had taken pleasure in the intention of being kind

to Mrs. Clavering; he knew that it would add extremely to Anne's happiness—but, like much other designed good, it was too late. He remembered with satisfaction the little courtesies he had been able to show Mrs. Clavering and Anne's gratitude for them; and then, before he knew it, Anne, in her black gown, pale and heavy-eyed, was sobbing in his arms.

She soon became composed, and told him calmly of the last days. She dwelt with comfort upon her last conversations with her mother about Baskerville, and the message she had sent him.

"My mother had not been any too well treated in this life," added Anne, the smoldering resentment in her heart showing in her eyes, "and you are almost the only man of your class who ever seemed to recognize her beautiful qualities—for my mother had beautiful qualities."

"I know it," replied Baskerville, with perfect sincerity, "and I tried to show my appreciation of them."

It was plain to Baskerville after spending some time with Anne that she knew nothing of the news concerning her father with which all Washington was ringing. Baskerville felt that it would never do for her to hear it by idle gossip or by chance. So, after awhile he told her—told her with all the gentleness, all the tenderness at his command, softening it so far as he could. Anne listened, tearless and dry-eyed. She followed him fairly well, and asked at last:

"Do you mean that—that—my father will be expelled from the Senate, and then—there will be no more trouble?"

"Dearest, I wish I could say so. But there will be a great deal more of trouble, I am afraid—enough to make it necessary that you and I should be married as soon as possible."

"And you would marry the daughter of a man so disgraced—who may end his days in a prison?"

"Yes—since it is you."

He then inquired her plans for the present. Mrs. Clavering's body was to

be taken for burial to her old home in Iowa.

Baskerville asked, or rather demanded, that within a month Anne should be prepared to become his wife.

"And haven't you some relations out in Iowa from whose house we can be married?" he said.

"Yes," replied Anne, "I have aunts and cousins there. I warn you they are very plain people, but they are very respectable. I don't think there is a person in my mother's family of whom I have any reason to be ashamed, although they are, as I tell you, plain people."

"That is of no consequence whatever. I shall wait until after your mother's funeral before writing your father and having our engagement announced, and within a month I shall come to Iowa to marry you."

And Anne, seeing this sweet refuge open to her, took heart of grace and comfort.

Clavering himself, sitting in his darkened library, was in no way awed by death having invaded his house. He had been brought face to face with it too often to be afraid of it; he was a genuine, thoroughgoing disbeliever in everything except money and power, and he regarded the end of life as being an interesting but unimportant event.

His wife's death was most opportune for him; it made it certain that Elizabeth Darrell would marry him. He had fully realized that stubborn prejudice against divorce on Elizabeth's part, and although he had not seriously doubted his ability to overcome it, yet it had been stubborn. Now all was smoothed away. He would act with perfect propriety, under the circumstances; he surmised enough about the women of Elizabeth's class to understand that a breach of decorum would shock her far more than a breach of morals. There would be no outward breach of decorum. He would wait until after the funeral before writing her; but it would be useless, hypocritical and even dangerous to postpone it longer.

With these thoughts in his mind he

sat through the day, receiving and answering telegrams, scanning the newspapers, and digesting his own disgrace as exposed in print. Even that had come at a fortunate time for him—if there is a fortunate time to be branded a thief, a liar and a perjurer, a suborner of perjury, a corrupter of courts, a purchaser of legislatures. Elizabeth would feel sorry for him; she wouldn't understand the thing at all. He would insist on being married in the autumn, and Elizabeth would no doubt be glad to be married as far away from Washington as possible. Perhaps she might agree to meet him in London and be married there—he would go over in the summer, take the finest house to be had for money, and transport all the superb equipment of his Washington establishment to London. He also remembered with satisfaction that he had nothing now to fear on the score of divorce from that soft-spoken, wooden-headed, fire-eating old impracticable General Brandon, with his fatal tendency to settle with the pistol questions concerning "the ladies of his family." In these reflections and considerations James Clavering passed the first day of his widowerhood.

On the third day after Mrs. Clavering's death the great house was shut up and silent. The Claverings left it, never to return to it. It stood vacant, a monument of man's vicissitudes.

The day after Mrs. Clavering's burial took place in the little Iowa town where her family lived a line appeared in the society column of a leading Washington newspaper, announcing the engagement of Anne Clavering and Richard Baskerville.

Coming as it did on the heels of the tragic events in the Clavering family and Baskerville's share in a part of these events, the announcement was startling though far from unexpected. Mrs. Luttrell took upon herself the office of personally acquainting her friends with the engagement and declaring her entire satisfaction with it. Being by nature an offensive partisan, much given to pernicious activity in causes which engaged her heart, Mrs.



Luttrell soon developed into a champion of the whole Clavinger family. She discovered many admirable qualities in Clavinger himself, and changed her tune completely concerning Élise and Lydia, whom she now spoke of as "a couple of giddy chits, quite harmless, and only a little wild." These two young women had speedily made up their minds to fly to Europe, and arranged to do so as soon as Anne should be married, which was to be within the month.

The catastrophes of the Clavinger family made a profound impression on Washington. Their meteoric career was a sort of epitome of all the possibilities of the sudden acquisition of wealth. Whatever might be said of them, they were at least not cowards—not even Reginald Clavinger was a coward. They were boldly bad, or boldly good. Anne Clavinger had won for herself a place in the esteem of society which was of great value. Not one disrespectful or unkind word was spoken of her when the day of reckoning for the Claverings came.

The Senate allowed James Clavinger two weeks to recover from his grief at his wife's death before annihilating him as a senator. Clavinger improved the time not only by arranging for his second marriage, but by forestalling, when he had no fighting ground, the criminal indictments which might be expected to be found against him. He paid out secretly in satisfaction-money, and reconveyed in bonds, nearly three millions of dollars. There were several millions more to be fought over, but that was a matter of time, and he would still have a great fortune remaining, if every suit went against him.

It would very much have simplified his property arrangements had Elizabeth Darrell consented to marry him within a few weeks of his widowhood. But this Clavinger knew was not to be thought of.

A week after his wife's death he wrote to Elizabeth. He quietly assumed that all the arrangements had been made for their marriage, as soon as he should have got his divorce.

In his letter he reminded Elizabeth there could be now no question or scruple in regard to her marrying him. He told her he would be in Washington at the end of a week, when the proceedings in the Senate would take place, and that he should expect to see her. He asked her to write and let him know where they should meet.

Elizabeth realized that she had gone too far to refuse Clavinger a meeting, nor, in fact, did she desire to avoid him. Her feelings toward him had become more and more chaotic; they did not remain the same for an hour together. She felt that a powerful blow had been dealt her objection to marrying him in the removal of the divorce question; she doubted in her heart whether she ever could have been brought to the point of marrying him had his wife not died.

And then there had been another interview with Macbean. He had told Elizabeth he was about to leave Washington to be absent a month, as he was combining pleasure with business on his visit to America, but that on his return, if the necklace were not forthcoming, he should begin legal proceedings immediately. Mr. Macbean was fully persuaded, while he was talking to Elizabeth, that the necklace was around her neck under her high gown, or in her pocket, or in a secret drawer of her writing-desk—in any one of those strange places where women keep their valuables. Elizabeth, in truth, did not know whether the necklace was in America, Europe, Asia, Africa or Australia.

Then Baskerville, in spite of the crisis in his own affairs, had not neglected Elizabeth. He had managed to see Macbean, and had discovered that the solicitor was perfectly justified in all he had done, from the legal point of view. When Baskerville came to inquire how far Colonel Pelham was responsible for what was done he was met by an icy reticence on Mr. Macbean's part, who replied that Baskerville was asking unprofessional questions, and in embarrassment Baskerville desisted. It be-

came clear, however, and Baskerville so wrote to Elizabeth, that her concealment of the pawning of the necklace, and her inability to pay back the money she raised on it, were very serious matters, and she should at once lay the matter before her father.

Elizabeth, however, had not been able to bring herself to that. She thought of all sorts of wild alternatives, such as asking Clavering to lend her the money; but her soul recoiled from them. She even considered writing a letter to Hugh Pelham; but at that, too, her heart cried aloud in protest. She did not know where Pelham was, but surmised that he was still in West Africa. A letter addressed to the War Office would reach him—but when?

Clavering had reckoned upon Elizabeth's neither knowing nor appreciating the effect of the revelations about him; in this, however, he was mistaken. She had read the newspapers diligently, and understood his affairs far better than Clavering dreamed. The case had made a tremendous sensation. The tragic circumstances of the catastrophe, the probable action of the Senate which was known in advance, the far reaching scandals which would result from the making public of the findings, all combined to give the country a profound shock—a shock so profound that it was known it would seriously jeopardize for the party in power the States in which Clavering and his gang had operated.

Among public men in Washington the feeling was intense. The senators who from a combination of honesty and policy had advocated going to the bottom of the scandals and punishing everybody found guilty, were in the position of doctors who have successfully performed a hazardous operation, but are uncertain whether the patient will survive or not. There was no doubt that many criminal prosecutions would follow, but there was a general belief that Clavering was too able and resourceful a man, and had too much money, to be actually pun-

ished for the crimes he had undoubtedly committed. His real punishment was his expulsion from the Senate.

Elizabeth Darrell knew all these things, and turned them over in her mind until she was half distracted. Another thing, small to a man but large to a woman, tormented her. She must meet Clavering—but where? Not in her father's house; that could only be done secretly, and she could not stoop to deceive her father. The only way she could think of was in the little park, far at the other end of the town, where their first momentous meeting had taken place. So, feeling the humiliation of what she was doing, Elizabeth replied to Clavering's letter, and named a day—the day before the one set for the final proceedings in the Senate—when she would see him, and she named six o'clock in the afternoon, in the little out of the way park.

It was March then of a forward spring. The day had been one of those sudden warm and balmy days which come upon Washington at the most unlikely seasons. Already the grass was green and the miles upon miles of shade trees were full of sap and the buds were near to bursting. Six o'clock was not quite dusk, but it was as late as Elizabeth dared to make her appointment. Her heart was heavy as she walked along the quiet, unfamiliar streets toward the park—as heavy as on that day, only a few months before, when she had returned to Washington after her widowhood. Then she had been oppressed with the thought that life was over for her—nothing interesting would ever again happen to her. And what had not happened to her!

When Elizabeth reached the park she found Clavering awaiting her. He could not but note the grace of her walk and the beauty of her figure as she approached him. She was one of those women who become more interesting, if less handsome, under the stress of feeling. Her dark eyes were appealing, and she sank rather than sat upon the park bench to which Clavering escorted her.

"You seem to have taken my troubles to heart," he said, with the air and manner of an accepted lover.

Elizabeth made no reply. She had not been able to discover, in the chaos of her emotions, how far Clavering's troubles really touched her.

"However," said Clavering, "the worst will be over tomorrow. I wish you could be in the Senate gallery, to see how I bear it. The vote on expulsion takes place tomorrow, directly after the morning hour, and I know precisely the majority against me—it will be quite enough to do the work."

Then he added, with a cool smile:

"I believe if you could be present you would realize what a pack of rascals have sacrificed me to political expediency! Unluckily I can't offer you a seat in the senators' gallery, as I might have done a short while ago. The fools think I will stay away, but I shall be in my seat, and from it I shall make my defense and my promise to return to the Senate by the mandate of my State. It will sound well, but to tell you the truth I have no more wish to return than the Legislature has the intention of returning me. I have pleasanter things in view—it is life with you."

Elizabeth, beguiled in spite of herself as women are by courage, glanced at Clavering. Yes, he was not afraid of any man or of anything, while she was consumed with terror over a paltry five hundred pounds and the loss of a necklace worth only a trifle in Clavering's eyes. She longed that he would break through her prohibition and speak about the necklace. But Clavering did not, and never intended to do so. He knew very well that Elizabeth's necessities were his best advocates, and he did not purpose silencing any of them.

Elizabeth's reply, after a pause, to Clavering's remark was:

"I shouldn't like to see you tomorrow. It will be too tragic."

"It is a pity that I am not divorced instead of being so recent a widower," Clavering replied. "Then you could marry me at the moment of misfor-

tune—as Richard Baskerville proposes to marry my daughter Anne. It would be a great help to me now, if it were possible. As it is, we shall have to postpone our marriage until the autumn."

"No," replied Elizabeth decisively; "it cannot be until next year."

Clavering's eyes flashed. It was the first time she had ever fully admitted that she meant to marry him, although he had from the beginning assumed it. He had very little doubt that he could induce her to shorten the time of waiting.

"We will talk about that later. Meanwhile I suppose you will stay here with your father. We can't enjoy the London house this season, but I shall go abroad in June. I shall have straightened things out by that time, and I can select a house. It will be as good a one as that which I have lived in here. I can ship all the furnishings, pictures and plate, with the horses and carriages, to London in advance, and have your establishment ready for you when you arrive. Perhaps it would be better for us to be married in London."

Elizabeth Darrell was not what is called a mercenary woman; she had hesitated when offered vast wealth, and had even declined it on the terms first offered to her, nor did she believe that she would ever have agreed to marry Clavering, in the event of his divorce, but for the removal of her scruples of conscience on finding that his first marriage was illegal. But these words of Clavering's about the London establishment brought to mind her former life there. She made a rapid mental comparison of Clavering with poor, honest, brave, stupid, dead Jack Darrell, with Pelham, as he had been; with her father; and the comparison staggered and revolted her. If it were written, however, in the book of destiny that she should marry Clavering it were better that they should be married in London, as he suggested. She would rather escape her father's eye when that transaction took place—and nobody else in the world cared

how or when she was married, or what might become of her.

Clavering spent the time of their interview in planning their future life together. He offered her luxury in every form, but he was too astute a man to make his purchase of her too obvious. He by no means left out his love for her, which was in truth the master passion of his life just then. But he did not force it upon Elizabeth, seeing that she was as yet restless and but half tamed to his hand. Elizabeth listened to him, with the conviction growing in her mind that she must marry this man.

Their conversation lasted barely half an hour. Clavering urged Elizabeth to meet him again before he left Washington, which would be the next night, at midnight; but to this Elizabeth would not agree. Clavering saw that he must wait at least six months before she would tolerate any attentions from him, and he quickly made up his mind that it was best not to urge her too much now. He had practically received her promise to marry him at the end of a year, and considering the obstacles he had to contend with he felt pretty well satisfied.

As on the former occasion when they had met in the little park, Clavering went after a cab for Elizabeth, put her in it and they separated.

Elizabeth spent a solitary evening. The calm which reigned in Clavering's breast was by no means her portion. She felt that she had finally committed herself to marry him, and the prospect frightened her. She recalled Baskerville's words—the "dreadful possibilities" which might await a woman married to Clavering. Their contemplation frightened her more than ever. She was so absorbed in her own troubles that she scarcely gave a thought to Clavering's impending fate on the morrow.

She remained up late, and the clock had struck midnight before her light was out. Once in bed Elizabeth was seized with a maddening restlessness against which she fought for four hours. When the sky of night was wan and

pale with the coming dawn she rose, and going to her writing-table began to write steadily. Her letter was to Hugh Pelham.

She told him everything, without concealment—the story of the need that made her pawn the necklace, the story of Clavering, the story of her life in Washington, of her grief and amazement at what seemed to be Pelham's persecution of her, and it closed with a torrent of reproaches that came from the depths of her heart.

She sealed it and addressed it to Pelham in the care of the War Office at London. She had no idea where Pelham was or when the letter would reach him; but some time or other he would get it, and then he would know how cruel his conduct was and how far-reaching was the effect of his ill treatment of her. She had glossed over nothing about Clavering; she had painted him in his true colors, and she had told Pelham that but for him there would have been no temptation for her to have married such a man as Clavering.

When she had finished and sealed and stamped her letter, Elizabeth went to the window and drew the curtain. The flush that precedes the dawn was over the opaline sky; it was the beginning of an exquisite spring day. The city lay still and quiet; only one footfall was heard—that of the postman collecting the letters from the mailbox at the corner. As he passed briskly along the street under Elizabeth's window a letter softly fluttered down and fell at his feet. He glanced up and saw a window high above him being closed. He picked up the letter and put it in his bag and went on, whistling.

Elizabeth, up in her bedroom, threw herself upon her bed and sank into a heavy and dreamless sleep that lasted until Serena knocked at her door at nine o'clock. Elizabeth rose, dressed and breakfasted like a person in a dream. She remembered her letter instantly, and the recollection of it made her uneasy. Gradually her uneasiness turned to an agony of regret. She



would have given ten years of her life to have recalled the letter; but she supposed it was now impossible.

Her great concern made her forget all about Clavering's impending doom that day, until quite noon. As she began to consider it the spirit of restlessness which seemed to possess her impelled her to wish that she could witness the scene in the Senate chamber. It might take her mind from her letter, which burned in her memory and was eating her heart out with shame and unavailing repentance. She knew there would be vast crowds at the Capitol, but she felt sure that not one of her few acquaintances in Washington would be there. About one o'clock she suddenly resolved to go to the Capitol. Covering her face, as well as her hat, with a thick black veil, she started for the white-domed building on the hill.

When she reached the plaza she found a great crowd surrounding the north wing. Not in the memory of man had such an event as the expulsion of a senator occurred, and it was the very thing to stimulate the unhealthy curiosity of thousands. A steady stream poured into the doorways and jammed the corridors. Elizabeth doubted whether she would ever get nearer than the Senate corridor, much less be able to get into the small public gallery. She noticed, however, that the multitude was pouring into the ground floor entrance, so she determined to mount the long, wide flight of steps on the east front and enter the rotunda through the great bronze doors.

It was a beautiful spring day and the crowd was a well-dressed and cheerful one. Nobody would have dreamed that they were about to attend a great public tragedy.

As Elizabeth reached the top of the flight she turned involuntarily to look at the beautiful panorama outspread before her in the Southern sunshine. Fair and faintly green lay the park-like gardens around the Capitol, while the golden dome of the National Library flashed and gleamed in the noonday

radiance. Never before had she thought Washington a joyous-looking city, but today, with sunshine and life and motion, with this animated throng of persons, this continual passing to and fro, it reminded her of Paris on a fête day.

While Elizabeth was looking upon the charming scene outspread before her she heard the trampling of hoofs and the roll of a carriage below her. Clavering, in his handsomest brougham, with a superb pair of horses, had just driven up. The coachman and footman wore the newest, smartest and blackest of mourning liveries for the mistress they had seen ignored, when not insulted, during the whole term of their service. Forth from the carriage, a cynosure for the staring, curious crowd, stepped Clavering. He, too, was dressed in new and immaculate mourning, with a crape-covered hat.

Elizabeth shrank behind one of the huge pillars, but from it she saw Clavering's dignified and ever graceful air as he braved the glances of the multitude. The lower entrance being jammed with people, he leisurely mounted the great flight of steps—a thing he had never done in all his senatorial service.

The crowd watched him with admiration and gratitude—it gave them the more time and the better opportunity of seeing him. He passed close enough to Elizabeth to have touched her, as she stood quaking with shame and fear; but, looking neither to the right nor the left, he walked on, calm, courageous and apparently at ease with himself and all the world.

Elizabeth, still moved by an impulse stronger than her will, pressed forward through the rotunda into the corridors. They were packed, and the doors to the public galleries had long been closed. Elizabeth found herself in the midst of a surging crowd, in the corridor leading to the reserved gallery—the place in which Clavering had told her he could no longer admit her. While she was standing there, crushed on either side, a pathway was opened, and a party of senators' wives approached

the door. At the same moment it was opened and some people came out. In the slight confusion several tried to get in; the doorkeepers, trying to separate the sheep from the goats, pushed the intruders back and pushed Elizabeth in with the senatorial party.

"But I have no right in here," she said hurriedly to the doorkeeper who shoved her into the gallery.

"Just go in, madam, and let me shut these people out," replied the doorkeeper, seeing the necessity for closing the door at once. So Elizabeth found herself in the last place either she or Clavering expected her to be—in the gallery set apart for the senatorial families.

It was then almost two o'clock, when the morning hour expired, and the first business to be taken up was the resolution of expulsion against Senator Clavering. There was a subdued tremor over the whole scene; the senators who were to do a great act of public justice upon one of their own number were deeply moved over it. Not one of them had ever before taken part in such proceedings, and the species of civil death they were about to inflict on a man once counted worthy to sit among them was in some respects worse than the death of the body. The seriousness of the occasion affected everyone present; a psychic wave of shame, regret and solemnity swept over the whole assemblage, and a strange stillness reigned among the people who filled the galleries. Nearly every senator was in his seat, and the space back of them was crowded with members of the other House and persons who had the privileges of the floor.

Clavering sat in his accustomed place, a cool and apparently disinterested observer of the proceedings. His presence was highly disconcerting to the committee which had prepared the report, and indeed to every senator present. It had been hoped that Clavering would absent himself; there were no precedents in the present generation for such proceedings, and it would have been altogether easier if Clavering had chosen to remain away.

But, as he was a senator up to the moment the vote was taken, no one could say him nay.

Elizabeth found no trouble in concealing herself behind the large hats and feathers of the ladies in the reserved gallery, and she could observe Clavering closely. She thought she had never seen him look so handsome and even distinguished in appearance. Had he only been honest! Some thoughts like these raced through Clavering's brain. He recalled Baskerville's remark, "There is no real substitute for honesty," and he remembered several occasions when he could have afforded to be honest and had not been—and he regretted it. Most of all, he regretted not having taken greater precautions when he was dishonest.

At last, the morning hour having expired, the next business on the calendar was the reading of the report of the committee of investigation on the affairs of the K. F. R. land grants, and the corporations connected therewith. The Vice-President, looking pale and worried, recognized the chairman of the committee, who looked paler and more worried. The stillness resolved itself into a death-like silence, broken only by the resonant tones of the reading clerk.

It was not a long report—the reading of it lasted scarcely three-quarters of an hour; but it was a terrible one. As the charges were named and declared proved, a kind of horror appeared to settle down upon the Senate chamber. The senators who had been lukewarm in the matter were shamed for themselves; those who had been charged with the execution of justice were shamed for the cause of popular government. If such things were possible in a government by the people and for the people and of the people, it was an indictment against the whole people.

During it all Clavering sat with unshaken calmness. Not by a glance out of his handsome, stern eyes nor the least variation of color in his clear and ruddy complexion did he indicate the smallest agitation. Not even the

last clause, which recommended his expulsion from the Senate of the United States, and which every member of the committee signed, without a dissenting voice, had the power to move him from his cool composure.

When the reading was concluded the chairman of the committee rose and made a few explanations of the report. He spoke in an agitated and broken voice. Before introducing the resolution of expulsion, he hesitated and looked toward Clavering. Clavering rose, and on being recognized by the Chair, asked to be heard in a brief defense.

Although he had always been a hard worker in his committee-room, Clavering had not often got upon his feet to speak in the Senate chamber. As he had told Elizabeth months before, he always knew his limitations as a debater. Having been used to lording over men for many years, the courteous assumption that every senator is a wise man had never sat well on him. When he spoke he had always been listened to, because he always had something to say; but he had shown his usual good judgment by not measuring himself with the giants of debate. Today, however, he had nothing more to hope or fear from those grave men, whose scorn of him was swallowed up in the execution of justice upon him.

As he rose to speak, to many minds came back that old Homeric line, "As the passing leaves, so is the passing of men." And this man was passing from life into civil death before their eyes.

Clavering, in his beautifully clear and well-modulated voice, began his defense, if defense it could be called. He told briefly but impressively of his early struggles, of his lack of education, of the wild life of the West into which he was inducted early, of the disregard of written laws in the administration of the justice with which he was familiar, how the strong men ruled by virtue of their strength, how great enterprises were carried through by forces not understood or even known

in old and settled communities. He described the effect of his operations in large sections of country, which made him hosts of friends and hosts of enemies. He subtly called attention by indirection to that unwritten law, voiced by a British general in India, that there were in all partly civilized countries certain necessary and salutary rascalities—to be carried through by the strong and wise against the weak and foolish. Coming down to his own case, he made no appeal for mercy, and offered no plea in abatement. On the contrary, he became distinctly aggressive, and heaped ridicule upon the committee of elderly gentlemen sitting in their luxurious committee-room, passing judgment on the storm and stress of men and things as unknown to them as the inhabitants of another planet.

His conclusion was a ringing defiance of his enemies, a promise of vengeance upon them, and a solemn declaration that he would return, rehabilitated, to the Senate of the United States, and every man who believed him guilty might count himself the everlasting enemy of James Clavering from that day forth.

When he sat down there was from the public galleries an involuntary burst of applause which was instantly suppressed. Two or three women wept aloud; an aged senator attempted to rise from his seat, fell back, and was carried out half fainting. There were a few minutes of nervous quiet and whispering, and then the final proceedings began. They were short and exquisitely painful. The resolution of expulsion was put and received a three-fourths vote in its favor. Half a dozen senators in a group voted against the resolution, and a few others were absent or refrained from voting. When the result was declared amid a death-like silence, Clavering rose and, making a low bow toward the senators who had voted for him, left his seat and went toward the aisle. As he reached it he turned to the Chair and made another bow full of dignity and respect; and then, without the least

flurry or discomposure, retired from the Senate chamber which it had been the summit of his lifelong ambition to enter and of which he was never again to cross the threshold. He was to see no more service of the great Demos. But not Alcibiades, when he called the Athenians a pack of dogs, looked more sincerely contemptuous than did James Clavering of the United States Senate when, a disgraced and branded man, he walked out of the Senate chamber.

## XI

IN the first week of April Richard Baskerville and Anne Clavering were married in the little Iowa town where Mrs. Clavering's family lived and where Anne had remained since her mother's death. The wedding took place at Mr. Joshua Hicks's house, one of the best in the town.

Mr. Hicks was Anne's uncle by marriage, a leading merchant in the place, and a better man or a better citizen could not be found in the State of Iowa. He wore ready-made clothes, weighed out sugar and tea and sold calico by the yard, was a person of considerable wit and intelligence, and had a lofty self-respect which put him at ease in every society. His wife was a younger, better-looking and better educated woman than Mrs. Clavering, and as good as that poor woman had been. Their sons and daughters were ornaments of the high school, had mapped out careers for themselves, but meantime treated their parents with affectionate deference. In their drawing-room, called a front parlor, furnished in red plush and with chromos on the walls, Anne Clavering became the wife of Richard Baskerville, the descendant of the oldest landed aristocracy in Virginia and Maryland. Clavering himself had said he would be present, but at the last minute telegraphed that he would be unable to come, having been suddenly called to Washington. He sent Anne a handsome cheque as a wedding gift. Elise and Lydia, who had spent

the intervening time between their mother's funeral and their sister's marriage in shopping in Chicago and preparing for a precipitate trip to Europe, returned to the little town and remained over a train in order to be present at the wedding. Baskerville would have been glad if they had been absent. Reginald Clavering gave his sister away.

It was the plainest and simplest wedding imaginable. The bride wore a white muslin, made by the village dressmaker. The bridegroom arrived on foot from the village tavern, where he had been staying. They began their wedding tour by driving away in the Hicks family surrey to another little country village seven miles off. It was a golden April afternoon, with an aroma of spring in the air, and the fields and orchards echoed with songs of birds—it was their mating-time. Mr. Hicks's hired man, who drove the married lovers to their destination, where they were to spend their honeymoon, declared he had never seen a bride and bridegroom so little spoony. He had, in truth, although he knew it not, never seen a bride and bridegroom who loved each other so much.

Clavering's call to Washington, which prevented him from attending his daughter's wedding, in reality consisted of a few lines from Elizabeth Darrell. After that March day in the Senate chamber Elizabeth fell into a settled listlessness. She felt herself obliged to marry Clavering eventually, as the only way out of an intolerable position; and this listlessness from which she suffered always falls upon those who succumb to what is reckoned as irrevocable fate. The spring was in its full splendor, and the town was beautiful in all its glory of green trees and emerald grass, and great clumps of flowering shrubs and sweet-scented hyacinths and crocuses and tulips. No city in the world has in it so much sylvan beauty as Washington, and in the spring it is a place of enchanting verdure. All this awakening of the spring made Elizabeth Darrell only the more sad, the more dispirited.



The old, old feeling came upon her of the dissonance of nature and man—the world beautiful, and man despairing.

Reading, her sole resource, no longer amused her. It was a solace she had tried, and it had failed her; so she read no more, nor thought nor worked, nor did anything but quietly endure.

She affected cheerfulness when she met her father in the afternoons, and General Brandon, whom a child could deceive, thought how improved in spirits she had grown since the autumn. The general's confidence in Clavering continued quite unshaken, and he proclaimed solemnly that no man in public life, since the foundation of the Government, had been so hounded and persecuted as "that high-toned gentleman, sir, ex-Senator Clavering."

Next to the thought of marrying Clavering the most heartbreaking thing to Elizabeth was the memory of the rash letter she had written to Hugh Pelham. The only mitigation of this was that he would not get it for many months—perhaps never. Her cheeks burned at every recollection of it.

The month had passed away at the end of which Macbean had promised to appear, but so far she had heard and seen nothing more of him. She felt sure, however, that Macbean had not forgotten her, and she looked for him daily. Then she must ask Clavering for money—and that would settle her fate.

One soft spring night she sat at the open drawing-room window, looking out on the quiet street, where the great Clavering house loomed dark, silent and deserted. There was no light in the drawing-room where Elizabeth sat, but a gas-jet in the hall cast a flame of yellow radiance in at the doorway. Elizabeth sat in the shadow and the silence. Suddenly a peremptory ring was heard at the bell, and in a minute or two Serena entered the room and handed Elizabeth a white envelope with a telegram in it.

Elizabeth had more than the usual feminine dread of a telegraphic despatch, and she held the envelope in her hand for ten minutes before she could

summon courage to open it. Only Clavering or Macbean could be telegraphing her, and to hear from either meant a stab. At last she forced herself to tear the envelope open. It was a cablegram from London, and read:

Your letter just received. Am sailing for America next Saturday. You must not, shall not marry Clavering. Why did you not write me before?

HUGH PELHAM.

Serena, who dreaded telegrams, went back to her own regions. Presently she returned and looked in the drawing-room door at Elizabeth. She was sitting still by the open window in the half darkness, in the same position in which she had been half an hour before.

Serena, who knew and had known all the time that Elizabeth was unhappy, went away and was troubled in mind. Half an hour later she returned. Elizabeth had changed her position slightly. She rested her elbows on the window-sill, and her face was buried in her hands.

"Miss 'Liz'beth," said Serena, in her soft voice, and laying a hard, honest, sympathetic black hand on Elizabeth's shoulder, "fur de Lord's sake, doan' 'stress yo'se'f so. Doan' you marry dat Claverin' man, nor any 'urr man, ef you doan' want to. Me an' de gin'l will teck keer on you. Doan' you trouble 'bout nothin' 't all, honey."

"Oh, Serena," cried Elizabeth, raising a pale, glorified face and throwing her arms around Serena's black neck, "I am the happiest person in the world! He is coming! He will start day after tomorrow. Oh, Serena, I am not distressed—I am not frightened any more!"

"'Tain' dat Claverin' man!" answered Serena. She alone of the whole world had suspected Clavering's intentions.

"No! no! no! It is another man—the man I——"

Elizabeth, without finishing the sentence, slipped out of Serena's arms, upstairs to her own room, to be alone with her happiness.

Although she had heard Clavering's

name spoken, it was near midnight before she really gave him a thought. Then she wrote him a few lines—very humble, very apologetic, but no man of sense on earth could fail to know, on reading them, that the woman who wrote them was fixed in her aversion to marrying him. And as in the case of that former letter, she watched for the passing postman in the early morning and dropped the letter at his feet.

She summoned up courage to tell her father next day that Pelham was coming.

"And I am sure," she said, blushing and faltering, "all will be right between us, and he will explain all that seemed unkind in his conduct to me."

General Brandon was sure of it, too, and was as pleased at the notion of rehabilitating Pelham as if somebody had left him a block of stock in the Standard Oil Company.

Elizabeth scarcely knew how the next week passed, so great was her exaltation. It is said that the highest form of pleasure is release from pain. She had that and other joys besides. It was to her as if the earth had at last recovered its balance with Pelham once more her friend. She did not dare to whisper anything more, even to herself. And every day brought her nearer to that hour—that poignant hour—when she should see Pelham once more as he had always been to her. She scanned the newspapers, and found what steamers sailed on the Saturday. She guessed by which one Pelham would sail. She watched out eagerly when they would be reported, and the morning and afternoon papers were in her hands by the time they were left at the door.

On the Saturday afternoon, which was warm and summer-like, Elizabeth was watching at the window for the afternoon newspaper—the morning newspaper had not chronicled the arrival of any of the Saturday steamers. When the negro newsboy threw it on the doorway, she ran out, and in her eagerness stood bareheaded on the steps, looking for the names of the incoming steamers. She found them—

all the Saturday steamers had arrived to the day and at an early hour. And Hugh Pelham might come at any moment! The thought brought the red blood to her cheeks and a quivering smile to her lips.

She looked down the street, under an archway of green, where played a fountain in a little open space, with brilliant tulip beds. The avenue into which the street debouched was gay with carriages and autos and merry, well-dressed girls and men, tripping along by twos and threes. As she gazed toward it a hansom clattered up, and in it sat Clavering. His arrival was so sudden that he could not but note the change in Elizabeth. He had thought, on his first glance, that he had never seen her look so youthful and so handsome. She had in truth regained much of her lost beauty, and when she saw him and recognized him the pallor, the shame, the repulsion in her face were eloquent. She drew back from him involuntarily, and her greeting, although gentle, did not conceal her feelings in the least.

As usual, Clavering appeared to be in the pink of condition. The crisis through which he had lately passed, the shock of the disappointment contained in Elizabeth's letter, his four days of hard travel, had left no mark upon him. He was a strong man in physique as well as in will.

Elizabeth showed great embarrassment, but Clavering met her without the least awkwardness. As soon as they were alone in the drawing-room, cool and darkened from the too ardent sun, Clavering came to the point.

"I was, of course, astounded to receive your letter," he said. "I was on my ranch. I had just arrived, and was sitting down to supper when the mail was brought from the post-office twenty miles away. I found if I left at once I could make the midnight train, and that would give me fast connections all the way through. So, when I had finished my supper—it took me just twenty minutes—you know a ranchman's supper isn't a function, so to speak—I got on horseback and rode

nearly thirty miles in four hours and a half. I had been riding all day, too. So you see I'm a very determined lover. This is my first love, you know—the first like this, I mean—and I couldn't afford to throw it away."

He was smiling now. The idea that the slim woman, dressed in black, sitting before him, with the red and white coming and going in her cheeks, could resist him really seemed preposterous to him.

Elizabeth remained silent, and Clavering knew that silence in a woman is momentous. As she made no reply he said, after a long pause:

"And how about that other man?"

Elizabeth had said no word in her letter about anyone else, and started at Clavering's words.

"I—I—"

She could get no farther. It was in the beginning only a shrewd surmise of Clavering's, but Elizabeth's faltering words and shrinking manner had confirmed it.

"I knew, of course, another man had turned up; that's why I came post haste," coolly remarked Clavering. "Now tell me all about him."

Elizabeth was forced to answer.

"It is—there was—my husband's cousin, Colonel Pelham."

"Oh, yes; the fellow that persecuted you after your husband's death. He, however, is hardly the man to interfere with me."

"I—I don't understand it quite—I thought he knew all that was being done. But I had a cablegram from him."

"You must have written to him?"

"Yes."

"Before or after you wrote me?"

"Before—and when I got his answer by cable I wrote you."

"I see. You prefer to marry him?"

"Colonel Pelham has not asked me to marry him," replied Elizabeth, with dignity.

"But he will. Elizabeth, you are promised to me. I told you I loved you—not in the flowery style of a young loon, but of a man who has worked and thought and seen enough to make him

know his own mind. Of course I can't coerce you—but the man who gets you away from me may look out for himself. See—the habits of a man's early life and thought never leave him. My first instinct has always been to take care of my own—and I was bred and made my mark in a country where neither wife-stealing nor sweetheart-stealing is permitted. Sometimes wives and sweethearts were stolen, but it was a dangerous business. Oh, I don't mean to use a gun—that went out twenty-five years ago. But there are many ways of ruining a man, and a woman, too."

He spoke quite pleasantly, sitting close to Elizabeth, and holding the crape-covered hat in his hand.

"Now tell me how you feel toward this man, Pelham."

"Colonel Pelham was my best friend during all my married life. I could not understand his conduct to me after my husband's death. One night lately I felt the impulse to write to him—shall I tell you everything?"

"Yes."

Clavering was all calm attention then.

"It was the night after our last interview. It came over me how—how—that I would rather die than marry you. Yes—I mean what I say. I didn't mean to kill myself—oh, no! But I would rather have been killed than married to you."

Clavering's ruddy face grew pale. He got up, walked about the room and sat down again, still close to Elizabeth. He saw she did not mean to be intentionally cruel, but was striving earnestly to tell him the whole truth.

"I have often heard of your power over other men, and I am sure you have great power over women, too; for I felt in some way obliged to marry you unless someone came in to help me. And then I thought of Hugh Pelham, and I thought it would be at least two or three months before he got my letter; but he was evidently in London, and he cabled back. I feel sure he reached New York early this morning."

"And did that money you owed have anything to do with it?"

"Yes. It troubled me dreadfully."

"And for a paltry thousand or two you have broken your word to me—broken it when I needed most of all your faith in me?"

"It was not the money wholly."

"It was also that I had lost my seat in the Senate of the United States?"

"Not altogether that—but I knew—I knew—I was at the Capitol that day."

"Pardon me, but you don't know. What does a woman know about such things?"

Elizabeth sat silent—what was there for her to say? And then she saw a figure pass the bowed shutters, making a shadow flit across the floor; and it was the shadow of Hugh Pelham. She sprang to her feet, a new light in her eyes which Clavering had never seen before. Clavering was, for an instant, as completely forgotten as if he had never been. He saw his fate in that look, that action. He rose, too, and the next moment Hugh Pelham walked into the room. He was visibly older, more weather-beaten than he had been three years before, and, although ten years Clavering's junior, he looked quite the same age. Evil-doing is very often good for the physical man and well-doing bad for the physical man. The two men instinctively recognized each other at the first glance and hated each other instantly with a mortal hatred. Elizabeth stood next Pelham. She had given him her hand without a word, and he held it firmly. Clavering turned to Elizabeth and said:

"When can I see you again? Pray make it as soon as possible; that much I can ask, after what has passed between us."

"Excuse me," said Pelham politely, "but I don't think Mrs. Darrell can see you again."

A dull red showed under Clavering's skin and a slight tremor shook his massive figure. It was a situation hard for any man to bear—and almost intolerable to James Clavering. He said the only thing possible under the circumstances.

"I must decline to accept your decision. It rests with Mrs. Darrell."

Elizabeth turned to Colonel Pelham.

"Will you kindly leave me with Mr. Clavering for a moment? It is his right, and later I will explain all to you."

Pelham, with a bow, walked out of the drawing-room, and, opening the street door, gazed upon the great pile of stone which the Claverings had lately inhabited. Clavering and Elizabeth being left alone, he said at once:

"I know how it is; I saw it in your eyes when the other man came. I am not one likely to ask for quarter. I accept my fate as I accepted my expulsion from the Senate and the loss of many millions of dollars. There are in the world compensations to me for the other things. For the loss of you there is no compensation. It is my first and my last chance of leading a better life, for I swear to you, Elizabeth, I meant to lead a better life if you had married me. But now—it doesn't matter in the least. I was born a hundred years too late; then I should have married you by force. I would have given my seat in the Senate to have seen such a look in your eyes when I came in as I saw when the other man came. Good-bye, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth gave him her hand. In all their acquaintance this was the first glimpse, the first suspicion she had had that anything like a noble and uplifting love existed in Clavering; but he, this man smirched all over, a bad husband, a bad father, who knew no truth nor honesty in his dealings with men or other women, loved once, truly, and at the moment of losing everything else he lost the only thing worthy the name of love which he had ever known in his whole life.

He took Elizabeth's hand in his; he had never so much as kissed it. He raised it to his lips, but Elizabeth, drawing back with a violent and undisguised repulsion, Clavering at once dropped her hand. He looked at her for a full minute—compelling her against her will to meet his gaze—



and then, turning, walked out of the house. On the steps outside he passed Pelham. Neither man spoke.

Pelham went into the drawing-room where Elizabeth stood, pale and trembling. As he closed the door after him she said, in an indescribable voice:

"He never kissed me—he never so much as kissed my hand."

"I don't think you would ever have married him in any event, Elizabeth," replied Pelham gently. "But let us not speak of him. I came home as soon as I could—I had not had any news from England after I was well in the interior of Africa. I knew nothing of what had been done until I got your letter—I was coming to you, anyway—your year of widowhood was over. Oh, Elizabeth, how could you misjudge me as you did!"

Clavering found himself in the largest room of the large suite of rooms he occupied at the most expensive hotel in Washington. The April sun was just setting, and it flamed upon a huge mirror directly opposite the luxurious chair in which he sat. He looked at his own image reflected full length in the glass. It seemed to be moving, to be surrounded by other figures. He saw them well—painted and bedizened women, some of them loaded with jewels and with coronets on their heads. Then there were men, and then some in court dress and with orders sparkling on their breasts. All of them had a foreign look, they spoke a language he only half understood, and all of them were harpies. They smiled upon him and fawned upon him, and he saw himself smiling back, rather pleased, it appeared. Sometimes he and this crowd were moving through splendid rooms; there were balls and dinners going on, and he could hear the clash and rhythm of orchestras. Again, they were in dismal business offices, or in raging crowds upon continental bourses. At first he was always surrounded, and it seemed as if he were losing something all the time. Gradually the men and

women about him no longer fawned upon him. They were familiar with him; then they jeered him; and presently they menaced him. They tried to strangle him, to rob him, and he had lost something—money or power, or capacity, or perhaps all three, and he could not defend himself. And they grew more and more foreign to him—he could not understand their language at all. They talked among themselves and he did not know what they were saying. And after awhile he grew helpless, and did not know where he was; and then he saw himself standing on a bridge at night, in a foreign city. There were many lights upon the bridge which were reflected in the black and rushing river. He was about to throw himself into the river when it suddenly came to him that it was cold, and he was thinly clad and hungry. And then he knew that he was in a strange country, and it came to him that he would return to his own land, to a place where there was warmth and comfort, and the strange thing he had lost would be awaiting him. But then he heard wild voices shrieking at him out of the darkness that he had no home, no country—that he would never again be warmed and fed. This produced a kind of horror in him, which made him cry out—a loud cry, he thought it. But it was really low and half smothered. And to his amazement he was not in his room at the hotel, but standing in the doorway of his own house. It was night, and he heard a great clock inside his own house strike the hour—nine o'clock. He could not remember how or why he had got from his hotel to his deserted house. He saw the caretaker, an old hobgoblin of a negro, peer at him from a basement window and he shrank behind the great stone pillars of the doorway. It was a warm, soft spring night, without a moon, but the purple floor of heaven glittered with palpitating stars. The street was always a quiet one—tonight it was so strangely still that he feared to move lest his footfall should sound too loud. And while he stood, dazed and

hesitating within his doorway, he saw two figures come together down the street and stop at Elizabeth's house. One was Elizabeth; the other was the man she loved. The night was so warm that the house door was left open. He watched the two figures mount the steps and go into the house. The man touched Elizabeth's arm in helping her up the steps. It was a simple, conventional thing, but Clavering saw revealed in it a love so deep, so constant, so passionately tender, that he thought he had never seen real love before.

Clavering turned away—to enter upon the fate that had been laid bare to him.



## PARTING

DEAR Love, we near the parting of the ways;  
 This is the hour when we must pray a prayer  
 To the good God that made the road so fair.  
 He who vouchsafed to us the golden days,  
 Filled with great hours that set the blood ablaze  
 Within our veins—who made us wise to wear  
 The halo set so briefly on our hair—  
 This is the hour to kneel and give Him praise!

We did not find the gleaming pot of gold  
 Beneath the rainbow's foot; we may not share  
 The treasure that we dreamed was swinging there,  
 And hand from hand must slip its clinging hold.  
 But we have been magnificently blest,  
 For we have known the rapture of the quest!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



## LOTS OF ROOM

HOWELL—I see that Rowell has put his property in his wife's name.

POWELL—Well, there's enough of it.

"Property?"

"No; name. He married a Russian."



## WHISKY NOT HIS DRINK

"WHY did Socrates take hemlock, pa?"  
 "I suppose it was because he wasn't a Kentucky man."

# WHEN NERO CAME TO CHEYENNE

By William R. Lighton

**A** GAIN and again and again, more times than you can count, you have looked on and wondered while trivial and apparently unrelated events linked themselves subtly but inevitably together until they made strong chains that bound men to their destiny.

There was the celebrated case of the Kansan who, if his wife had not made one extra green-apple dumpling for dinner, might have been a governor, or a congressman, or something. But she made the extra apple dumpling, and he ate it, then stayed in bed all the next day, while the plum dumpling of office went to somebody else. And there was the case of the girl about to be married. On the eve of her bridal day a neighbor's boy fell down a well. He was rescued unhurt; but the incident set the girl to thinking. What if she should have children and they should all fall down wells and be killed, leaving her childless and dependent upon cold charity at last! So she canceled the wedding and lived to a green old age—that is to say, an unripe and sour old age—of singleness.

By the same token, if one fatal drop of rain had not fallen out of an all but cloudless sky on a certain brilliant Wyoming day, this story would not have happened. I should have missed meeting Steve; together we should have missed laying our plans; and Nero would have come to Cheyenne and gone away again in humdrum quietude.

This is how it befell. I was riding alone over the trail that follows along

the eastward foot of Rawhide Buttes. The day was hot, windy, dusty; I was thirsty, hungry and tired, and there was not food nor water nor shelter from the sun within a dozen miles. I thought that a small smoke would help matters, and felt for the materials; but I had changed coats at Lusk, and my full pouch was miles behind me. By and bye, with diligent feeling about, I found a single crumpled cigarette paper. Turning all my pockets inside out, I gathered a scant pinch of tobacco crumbs, well mixed with lint, and at the last I found the end of one broken match—the head end. So far, so good. But the wind was high. I dismounted, squatted upon the sand, took off my coat and spread it over my head as a shelter tent. There, with infinite care, I made my cigarette and struck the match end on my boot heel. Success again; it burned and the cigarette was lit. I climbed back into the saddle and drew one long, thankful breath of the fragrant smoke. Then, though it was the very middle of the dry season, and no rain was due for a good two months, one big, solitary drop fell from a hand's breadth of cloud overhead, striking my cigarette full upon its glowing end, and I was left mourning and desolate.

Five miles away across the sands I espied a moving black speck, and made out that it was a horseman following the Chimney Rock trail. Any right-minded son of Wyoming would be sure to have a plenty of the where-withal for a smoke; and in my then state of soul what mattered a ten-mile ride? Three-quarters of an hour later

I came within hailing distance of the traveler, and saw that it was Steve, the giant cook of the Coffey roundup.

He drew rein and waited for me to come up.

"Hullo!" he said, and put out a mighty fist.

I enlarged upon my desperate plight. Grinning, he brought out a big sackful of "shepherd's delight," a thick bunch of papers and a good handful of matches.

"Keep 'em," he said, when I would have given them back after satisfying my needs.

"Have you got more?" I asked.

He shook his head in answer. "I've quit," he said. "Got so it didn't taste good. I'm goin' to wait till I get a sure hankering again."

I offered my pocket flask, but again he shook his head.

"Haven't took a drink since the second day of last April," he said. "Savin' my money. Haven't drawn none all summer."

"That's good, Steve," I said in my simplicity, and between puffs of my cigarette went on to speak a few well-worn words in the way of a homily on virtue. He listened with an ominous gravity.

"That's so," he said at last. "This thing of drinkin' every day, regular, ain't no good. It kind of takes the aidge off your longin', so you don't rightly enjoy a real old tear when she comes. I've been savin' up till the alfalfa's all stacked. We're goin' down to Cheyenne next week and help run the town awhile—me, and Black's Jim, and Red McGee, and some more. Better come along. It's Frontier Day next week, and everybody'll be there. I've got a hundred and eighty dollars, and I stay three days. That's sixty dollars a day."

I felt instant regret for that senseless moral courage. Frontier Day at Cheyenne, in the company of those merry half-gods, would be an event; and there was I, committed by my fool tongue to precepts of stiff rectitude. I laughed weakly.

"After what I've just said? Constancy is a jewel, Steve."

"Shucks!" he retorted. "You want to leave your jewelry at home when you go to Cheyenne. Come on. It ain't goin' to be no common time; it's goin' to be a whizzer—a regular old gee-whizzer."

I knew what that meant. In the staid and rule-bound East to drink is to drink. There the dull theme stops short. But in the big cow-land out West there are endless variations played upon it. There "private drunk" describes the poor estate of the man who hunts a quiet spot and drinks himself into a fleeting forgetfulness of whatever ill besets him. He may or may not deserve sympathy; at best he is working only for ends of his own. The "big drunk" is one wherein a dozen or so of congenial ones foregather, for pure sport's sake, their behavior being always well under police control. But the "whizzer" brings together a whole countryside, fifty or a hundred miles across, and turns the place of assembly into a pagan paradise. Then the police get deaf and blind, perforce, and timid folk keep within doors or slink through back alleyways. Whatever there is in a man, beneath the mask of his sober reserve—whether bold daring, or wild deviltry, or heaven-born humor, or any other form of genius—surely comes out. And the superlative of "whizzer" is "gee-whizzer." Now you know, as well as I can tell you, what was likely to happen at Cheyenne.

"But Cheyenne is a hundred and forty miles from Lusk," I said, in wavering protest.

"You come down and meet us at the Nine Bar Ranch, and then it won't be so far," he grinned. "We'll start from there Monday noon, and we can make it by Wednesday night, in time not to miss much."

"All right, Steve," I said; and then we went our separate ways.

It was a little past sunset of Wednesday when we rode into Cheyenne, ten of us, and felt tentatively for a place



among the crowding thousands. A brief lull had fallen after the day's sports, while the town caught its breath for the coming night. What should we do first, to put ourselves in fit form?

"Let's go get a drink," said Red McGee.

"Listen at him!" Steve growled. "If we start now that'll mean ten drinks apiece before supper on an empty stomach, and then where would we be? There's lots of time—Thursday, Friday, Saturday—three whole days."

"Let's go and nail a place to sleep," said Black's Jim. "Beds'll be scarce."

But Steve seemed hard to please. "Sleep!" he scoffed. "We didn't come down here to sleep. We can sleep at home. What we'll do now is to feed. I know where. Come on."

We followed to a dim-lit place underground somewhere and fed as became us at such a time. We ate steaks and then steaks, and then more steaks, with rich, black coffee running along between, until I was made to think of the nursery rhyme about the man who ate a cow and ate a calf, *et cetera*, winding up with the priest and all the people for dessert. Then we went out and walked the streets, smoking, waiting for the hour when things would loosen up and get interesting. Once or twice we turned in at some place where the lights were bright and each took what he liked best, but nothing much. At one of these places Steve's roving eye caught sight of a lithographed poster hanging on the wall advertising a performance of "Quo Vadis." Right there Fate came in and laid its inexorable hand upon us.

"Boys, we'll see that show," Steve said, with quick resolution. "I ain't saw a right good show in four years; and that name has got the go in it. Come on. We're just in time to pick out good seats before she commences."

I excused myself. "I've seen that play twice," I said. "It's all right; but I'd rather stay outside and watch the crowd."

"All right," Steve acquiesced. "You

be at Burke's Place when the show's out, and we'll pick you up there." Then the nine of them went away and left me.

I had a good time. Never mind particulars. All Cheyenne had a good time that night—a noisy, high-spirited, care-free time. The mood of carnival was in the air; the oldest and grayest and gravest of those that drifted up and down the streets had jumped clear back in one easy jump to the temper of childhood and rioted in sheer excess of youngness. It was wondrously fine and jovial to see.

I wandered about until I was tired; then I sought the rendezvous of Burke's Place and sat down, glancing over the papers and watching the people come in. Just within the swinging doors was a descending flight of three steps, and nine out of ten of those who entered fell down the stairway. It was good sport to observe their various ways of taking the mishap, and time passed without dragging.

By and bye one appeared who was much out of the ordinary. He was in full evening dress, to the last detail of Inverness coat, dove-gray gloves and opera-hat. At the doorway he paused, raising a monocle to his eye; then came deliberately down the steps, walked deliberately to the bar and deliberately ordered what he wanted. One who would dare such dress and such conduct on the night of Frontier Day at Cheyenne must have rare stuff in him, I thought; and I got up and walked to his side.

He was taking a dry Martini cocktail in slow, calm sips. Presently he turned, put up his monocle and scanned me with the same unruffled composure. He was a fairly good-looking fellow, small, but with an air that made up for his want of stature. I spoke, with friendly intent, and he graciously met me halfway, with words of lively interest concerning the turbulent scenes within and without. I found out his name. Suppose we call him Smith. He was the man who played the part of Nero in the show.

When his cocktail was gone I hinted

at another, but he waved the hint aside.

"One at a time," he said. "I never take more. Thank you."

He drew his coat about him and was preparing to go. But just then the doors were flung wide open, and Steve and the boys came down in a tumbling cataract. They had loitered, evidently, along the way from the theatre, and were feeling very light-hearted. At sight of the novel figure standing before him Steve paused for a puzzled moment; then madness came upon him. Stooping quickly he put his huge arms about the immaculate Nero, lifted him up bodily and laid him at his length upon the bar.

"I want to pawn this treasure of mine for the drinks," he said to the barkeeper.

Nero was astonished; but he was game, too, and, lying where he was, his hand sought his pocket.

"Permit me to redeem myself," he said. "How much?"

"One-fifty," said the barkeeper; and the victim paid. It was plain that he would have liked to let his own glass go untasted; but he divined that that must not be, so he sipped at it leisurely.

"Mr. Smith," I said, "let me make you acquainted with some of the finest fellows in Wyoming." I went on to mention names, and Smith shook hands all around. Unfortunately, in the excitement of the moment, I forgot to speak of the identity that lay hidden under his own name. That was where I blundered.

Steve seemed conscience-stricken. "A friend of yours, Billy? I'm right sawry, I sure am."

But Nero interrupted. "Pray don't speak of it," he begged smoothly. "Not the slightest harm has been done. I like to meet you Westerners; you're so—so uncommonplace."

The doors flew open again and Red McGee, lagging behind the others, fell down the steps. He lay quite still for a little time, then picked himself up with many words.

"Well, thank God!" he cried. "I've found one place in this town that you

don't have to climb to get in. I've clumb and clumb till I'm plumb wore out. Climb up into a place, take one little drink and then turn right around and do a lot more hard climbin' to get out again."

Nero smiled. I liked his face better when he smiled. "With all that climbing you must be getting pretty well elevated by this time," he said; and that cost McGee one-sixty-five. That made three for Nero, who never took but one.

I thought I saw a chance to help Steve square himself.

"Steve, how was the show?" I asked, supposing, of course, that his childlike mind had enjoyed the fervid spectacle.

"Rotten!" he thundered. "Strictly on the bum. And you said it was a good piece! You're awful easy to suit. Shucks! That king in it—what was his name?—Ne-ro—him!" Desperately I plucked at his sleeve, but there was no stopping him. "It's goin' to cost me two weeks' pay to forget him. He was sure the rankest king I've saw—looked like somethin' the cats had fetched in from the barn. And act! Why, say——"

I took him forcibly by the arm and led him away out of doors.

"Steve!" I groaned. "That's Nero in there."

He craned his neck to look back through the window. "Him?" he questioned. "I reckon I've done it now, ain't I?"

"Call the boys out," I said. "We'll have to go somewhere else now." But I had much to learn about the giant's temper.

"Go somewhere else?" he echoed. "You'll go without me, then. This is just gettin' good. I'm goin' back in there and talk to Nero for a spell."

And back he went, his bronzed face broadly smiling, his big hand outstretched.

"Say, look here," he said heartily; "it ain't my fault that I can't keep my mouth shut, and it ain't your fault that you can't act. What do you say to callin' the thing off and startin' a new deal?"

Nero, gentleman that he was, took the proffered hand and laughed aloud in unfeigned mirth.

"Give it a name, boys," he said. "It seems to be on me again."

That was the fourth. If Nero had seriously intended going the intention was dissipated by this time. The infection of jocund abandon was in his blood; his fine eyes were alight, his clean-lined face wore a hale flush, his white teeth gleamed between lips broadly parted. He flung the cape of his Inverness back upon his shoulders and stood erect.

"Let's find a table," he suggested. "We must get better acquainted; and we don't want to stand up from now till morning. Barkeeper, give us some dry champagne, in pints."

Once I looked at my watch, and it was a half-hour past midnight; again, and it was three o'clock. Simple arithmetic would not serve for keeping tally of the various things that were set before us in those hours; that would need higher mathematics. Nor would simple English suffice for telling of what happened between times; that would need the gift of tongues. Do you think that sordid and low, you Easterners? Then you should have stood by and looked and listened; you would have begged for a place at the table. It doesn't work the same way, East and West. The difference may be in the air or it may be in the men; I am not sure. Chanta-Seechee Red, in his book, pointed the distinction with rare force one time, when an Eastern female cousin chided him for drinking and rolling in the gutter. "Gutter?" said he. "What put gutters into your mind? When I'm drinking, out home, I walk on the telegraph wires. There's nothing high enough for me." There you have it, exactly. Qualities and gifts wholly unsuspected cropped out. You would have looked in vain for signs to revolt you. Nobody thought of getting drunk.

If I could remember the things that were said, right and left, with reckless prodigality, my fortune would be made. Wit gushed and sparkled in an un-

checked flood. Nero was simply incomparable. By and bye he stood up on his chair and recited the story of the cuckoo clock and the chronic inebriate; and then Steve told of the whistling cow in the alfalfa patch. If you do not know those stories, make haste and get a good man to tell them to you. Your life will have a new zest thereafter.

Once Steve got up for a minute to stretch his great legs. He came back to us beaming.

"Jim was wantin' a place to sleep," he cried. "Remember? Well, he's found it. He's fell into a wool-rack, out by the back door, and got tangled up in the sticks so he couldn't get out. He's sound asleep. Come out and take a look."

We went out in a body; and we did things to the unconscious man that would make him use his mind when he awoke. Then we went back to our table.

"My head's perfectly clear," Nero challenged, though no one had expressed a doubt of it. "I can prove it to you. Where's the man that wants to swap something? I don't care what; I'll trade anything with anybody."

Red McGee stood up. "Here!" he shouted. "I'm your man. Let's swap boots and breeches."

The exchange was made. Nero took and donned the cowman's hairy Angora chaps and high-heeled riding-boots with their jingling spurs, then paraded before us about the room—a comical figure, Fifth avenue from head to waist, and Wyoming from there down. He was perfectly happy, and a little vain, too, I think, of his fine appearance. Red McGee went and linked arms with him, wearing Nero's full-dress trousers and patent-leathers, and they finished their march together, winding up with a cakewalk, while the joyous onlookers, a hundred strong, whistled ragtime.

"Oh, boys, boys!" Nero gasped, when he was in his chair again, "it's too fine to end. Why should it end? Life's short, anyway; let's enjoy it

while it lasts. I'll tell you: let's hire a big wagon and go to the Yellowstone country. We'll take an extra wagon for champagne. We'll show 'em a touch of high life, won't we? And we won't come back till we get good and ready. The show? Oh, blow the show! I'm tired of acting, anyway. I'll quit 'em, and we'll start right after breakfast." He stopped and wiped his eyes upon the back of his hand. "Why these tears?" he questioned plaintively.

The new day was upon us when we went in a crowd through the streets to Nero's hotel. He still wore his oddly assorted costume, and the people who were abroad turned to look. We saw him upstairs to the door of his room,

and there, though he protested, we left him.

"Good-bye," he said, as he wrung our hands again and again. "You're kings and princes, every one of you, and till death o'ertakes me I'll ne'er forget you."

But alas for the weakness of mortality! In the middle of the afternoon, as we were walking up the street, we came suddenly upon a spick and span figure in frock coat and silk hat, sporting a cane and a monocle. It was Nero again, clothed and in his right mind. As he came abreast of us he turned his eyes upon us for a moment in an interested gaze, then passed calmly on his way. He had already forgotten us. And we let it rest there.



## BEHIND THE TIMES

"BEHIND the times" expresses pat  
My sorry case. This last year's hat  
And shabby coat the fact betray.  
Her father frowns, and well he may—  
My pocketbook is lean and flat.

This hustling age I can't combat;  
Its fleeting fames, its fortunes fat  
Elude my grasp. I'm doomed to stay  
Behind the times.

But there's a game of tit-for-tat;  
I'm up to date, at least, in that.  
The world may run its whirling way  
For all o' me, since yesterday  
I kissed her while her father sat  
Behind the *Times*.

JENNIE BETTS HARTSWICK.



CHOLLIE—I understand that Miss Flighty was one of your traveling companions aboard the *Oceanic*.  
Dicky—Oh, yes; she was my companion in arms.



## AT THE VALLEY'S EDGE

By Edward Boltwood

MISS BARBARA KANE, satisfied with her simple, black evening gown, left her room in the Extons' house in Tuxedo and went down the corridor to Mrs. Exton's door. Three years ago, when she had taken Barbara from the hospital, Mrs. Exton had spared herself a lady's maid, but she soon discovered that a trained nurse and a lady's maid are by no means the same, and now Miss Kane found her employer in the deft hands of Victoire.

"You look charming, Barbara," sighed Mrs. Exton, with an anxious glance at her own fretful face in the mirror. "My hair is too high. You are quite incompetent, Victoire."

"Thank you, m'dame," murmured Victoire, and hurried away. Servants were apt to hurry away from Mrs. Exton when she was through with them.

Mrs. Exton sighed again into the mirror. She was a fragile, pretty woman. From the window Barbara gazed across the lawn, pink in the sunset.

"My husband will be late," complained Mrs. Exton, adjusting a bracelet lazily. "He loses civilized habits in that horrible mining country. I've noticed it more than ever since he returned this time. When was it? Tuesday—Wednesday?"

"Mr. Exton came from Montana on Tuesday," said Barbara. "He has driven to the stables. Vincent Minnerly was in the dog-cart also."

"Yes, Martin drove him to the post-office so that Vincent could mail proof-sheets or something. They must have made a queer combination, those two. Have you decided, Barbara?"

The girl did not reply at once, and Mrs. Exton eyed her enviously. Miss Kane's straight, healthful figure was silhouetted against the glass. She had a gracefully boyish profile and dark brown hair, which clustered low on her neck and forehead.

"I think I have decided," said Barbara leisurely.

"To say yes?"

"To say yes."

"I am so glad!" exclaimed Mrs. Exton, with conventional ecstasy. "Vincent Minnerly is so talented—all the book critics agree on that—and he is so rich. You are very wise, I'm sure. Really, the whole thing is as romantic as any of his novels. He must be terribly in love to—to—"

"To marry a nurse—a paid companion?"

"Oh, my dear!" protested Mrs. Exton shrilly. "I didn't say that. You should not look at it in that way. You should think only of his happiness. That is the way I tried to think of it when Martin begged me to marry him. If one has the good fortune to be necessary to a man that is enough for one, isn't it? Is that the first bell?" She curved her waxen throat and patted the fluff of lace on her low corsage. "Shall we go down?"

Barbara gave the lady an arm with a trace of her professional manner. There had been no real need of Barbara's services during her last year or two with Mrs. Exton. She had comforted herself, however, with the reflection that she had been given time to catch her breath and to review in books the nerve-racking grind of training-school and hospital. Then Vin-

cent Minnerly asked her to marry him, and the grind need never enslave her again. In Mrs. Exton's phrase, it was as romantic and comfortable as fiction.

They numbered six at dinner. Exton was late, according to his wife's prediction, but Minnerly managed to slip into his seat before the bouillon disappeared. The novelist wore modish clothes, with those trifling vagaries of toilet which impart an indefinite foreign air. They were in keeping with his distinguished face. He had the alert mouth of a man used to attracting attention, and it was set off by a short, close, tawny beard.

The two other guests were Adelaide Crimmock and Fitz Harding, the water-color man. The hostess shrugged her shoulders at the empty chair.

"You'll excuse Martin, won't you, Adelaide?" said she. "You won't mind him?"

"My love, a husband with a jaw like his is certainly to be minded," said Mrs. Crimmock, in the quick, loud voice which gave her a reputation for cleverness among the undiscerning. "Let us hope you mind him. I would, if I were you."

"My fault, I'm afraid, that he's not on time," apologized Minnerly, and looked over the epergne at Barbara. "I stopped to make those revisions in that yarn, Miss Kane—those changes you spoke of."

"Monieur attends, I think," said Fitz Harding. "I know his fairy tread."

The door banged and Exton pounded in, smoothing his tie.

"Sorry," he grunted. "No, don't care for soup."

He was an enormous, rawboned man and he sat down heavily. His wrinkled dinner coat fitted him badly, and the collar was awry about his sinewy neck. Mrs. Exton waved her fan.

"We shall expect now to see you blossom into an authoress, Barbara," she said playfully.

"I hope no such outrageous misfortune awaits you, Miss Kane," laughed Minnerly.

"Outrageous?" asked Barbara.

"Yes. Authorship is martyrdom that mankind may be entertained."

"Conceit!" cried Mrs. Crimmock. "I've seen many of your stories in print that were not entertaining in the least."

"Anybody can get an entertaining story into print," observed Minnerly. "To get a bad story published requires brains."

"Do you believe that, Mr. Exton?" said Mrs. Crimmock.

"Eh? Oh, yes." Exton made an effort to respond and failed clumsily. "I'm not much on stories," he acknowledged.

"They do present difficulties," said Minnerly.

"Lots of them are difficult to read," put in Mrs. Crimmock sharply, "if that's what you mean."

"I mean it is difficult to make them easy to read." Minnerly sipped his sherry meditatively. "For instance, there's the happy ending. Most people insist on that, you know."

"Well," said Fitz Harding, "if you twist the story into happiness when it should logically end otherwise, is that good art, Minnerly?"

"Yes, if you're a good twister."

"Is it honest?"

The author smiled. "What has honesty to do with it?" he retorted.

Barbara was vaguely discomfited by the question, and absently she watched Exton, who was stroking his stubby black mustache in his attempt to follow the discussion. She did not know him well, for he was seldom in the East.

"You see, Miss Kane," went on Minnerly, "everybody naturally prefers the agreeable to the disagreeable, and readers are not unnatural—except the critics, sometimes."

"But if the agreeable is false," said Barbara slowly, "and untrue? That doesn't seem to me quite honest on the author's part. Probably I don't understand."

Minnerly flushed perceptibly.

"I presume," suggested Fitz Harding, "that if we were frank we would

all confess to a desire to dodge what is hard. We are like a man under orders to cross a black, forbidding mountain who persuades himself that he can reach the other side by following a sunshiny valley. He would easily persuade himself, wouldn't he? So he dodges the mountain and——"

"And never crosses it as he was sent to do," said Barbara.

"No; but he has a good time in the sunshine," supplemented Mrs. Crimmock, "and I'm drinking the health, Vincent, of all of you nice guides to the valley."

Fitz Harding and Mrs. Exton laughed and raised their claret glasses. But Miss Kane leaned forward curiously, seeing that Exton at length had sensed some of the talk.

"Hold on," said he, clearing his throat. "How about the—the boss, who orders the man over the mountain? What's he going to think of a man who dodges?"

"Oh, the superior of my little allegory," interpreted the painter, "is fate, you know—destiny. Destiny can't think anything of anybody."

"Destiny?" hesitated Exton doubtfully.

"Yes—luck."

"I see." Exton frowned while his wife gave him a momentary, patronizing smile. "I see," he proceeded doggedly. "Then the man is a quitter. He ought to go straight where destiny sends him, or else—well, you know what the Almighty thinks about quitters."

"Martin!" piped Mrs. Exton.

"The mountain isn't real," said Fitz Harding somewhat helplessly. "You're out in Montana, perhaps, while we——"

"Oh, I beg your pardon," mumbled Exton. "I reckon, like Miss Kane, that I don't understand."

His eyes met Barbara's as he said this. The girl imagined she saw an odd flash in them which gleamed for the fraction of a second. She broke her lettuce reflectively, not sure that she liked Minnerly's notion of literary honesty. Usually Minnerly was piqued

and fascinated by her moods, because he could not always identify them, but tonight he was piqued because her mood was so intelligible.

"I told you that authorship is martyrdom," he asserted. "This is one of its penalties, to be called a guide to—I think quitters was the word, Exton?"

"I didn't mean to offend," apologized Exton. "But if I was telling a story and the path was marked from the start, I believe I'd follow it wherever it led."

"It might lead to the waste-paper basket," said Minnerly lightly, "if the path was unpleasant."

"Maybe it wouldn't be wasted, even so," concluded Exton, crumbling a cracker in his fist.

They had coffee on the dimly lit piazza. Mrs. Exton, alive to the obvious exigencies of the situation, asked Barbara to play for them. Before Minnerly could follow Barbara through the French window to the conveniently distant piano, Martin Exton went with her to the drawing-room. Mrs. Exton drummed petulantly with her fan, and Minnerly resumed his steamer-chair.

Exton fumbled at the wick of the tall piano-lamp with his blunt fingers, and Miss Kane sat down, touching the keys.

"I didn't know you played," he said. "Doesn't seem much in your line."

"It's in the line of the business of a professional companion," laughed Barbara.

"And of a trained nurse?"

"Hardly. Nurses haven't time for——"

"No, I should think not," said Exton. "Not much music and art about their work, eh?" He planted his elbows on the piano. "All that art stuff they talked at dinner was sort of nonsense to me, alongside of real work. That's because I'm thick-headed, of course. I'm used to rolling up my sleeves and doing things. That's all I'm good for."

"Yes, I understand," sighed Barbara. "I've done things, too."

"I'll bet you have," asserted Exton

heartily. "Nurses get great chances, don't they? To do things, I mean. Chances nobody else gets, man or woman."

Miss Kane opened a sheet of music briskly, rubbed her hands together, and launched a Chopin prelude. Exton straightened his back.

"I guess nurses are sent over that mountain of Fitz Harding's pretty often," he pursued. "I was wondering what you thought of it."

"I think—I would not—know enough—to find—the valley." Barbara spoke rhythmically to the beat of the melody.

"Somebody might know enough to show you the valley."

"Somebody in the story?"

"Oh, it's all a story."

She was surprised and glanced up at him, allowing the prelude to wander into an intermittent impromptu of minor chords. Exton was scowling at his tightly folded hands.

"The only kind of a story in my line," he said, "is the story that really happens. It's queer—but I know of a real story about a poor devil who got sent over a tough piece of country once."

"In Montana?" asked Miss Kane.

"Yes, in Montana. It was hard traveling out there where this fellow was, and everything was against him. The worst of it was that he was alone. He had to make his own trail across, all alone."

"Why?"

"Well, that was his luck, you see," said Exton. "Besides, he wanted to find out whether he was any good, or just an ordinary quitter."

"And he got the best of it."

"How can you tell?"

Barbara made no further pretense of playing. She rested her white rounded forearms on the music-rack.

"Because," she reasoned, "you wouldn't tell the anecdote unless you liked it, and you wouldn't like it unless the man beat the mountain, unless he won. That's logic. Now I must go to Mrs. Exton."

"What if the man didn't win?"

said Exton. "What if I was the man myself?"

"You don't make up very probable stories. A man like you would win."

She turned to slide the music into the case at her side. With no warning Exton's hand burned for an instant on her bare shoulder.

"I didn't win," he groaned. "I couldn't. I fought hard and I'm beaten. I'm looking—for the valley, the sunshine. Can't you see? I'm looking——"

"No," she gasped. "What do you mean?"

She sprang up, facing him. His big chin twitched and his eyes blazed.

"Don't say it," she whispered.

"Don't dare to say it. What must you think of me?"

"My God, I'm through with thinking. I'm through with fighting. I'm beaten." He raised his arm with the hopeless gesture of one guarding against a blow which he knows must strike.

Breathless and as if startled by a phantom, they gazed at each other under the crimson glow of the lamp, and Mrs. Exton's thin, inane voice quavered in the distance. Exton dropped his arm limply.

"I've insulted you," he muttered. "I'm sorry. I can say no more than that."

"Yes—you can say more than that," ventured Barbara solemnly. "You must say more, because you are not beaten. You are not the sort of man who seeks a valley when his mountain is to be crossed. You are not—a quitter."

"How do you know?" he said hoarsely. "What do you know of duty to be followed, and easy happiness that tempts you away from it? But if you tell me I can make this fight, then I can make it, and if you send me back to that mountain I'll never leave it again."

Barbara did not hear the final sentence. Hardly had he begun to speak before she was staring through the scarlet circle of light to a picture beyond it, looming mystically in the



shadows. She saw a dreary hospital ward with its rows of narrow cots. Her nostrils caught the pungent, familiar odors of the place. Two orderlies wheeled a hospital carriage on its way to the operating-room. A blue-gowned nurse walked beside it stanchly, stroking the sufferer's forehead, soothing him with brave, soft words.

"I'll never leave it again," repeated Exton. "You are the only woman in the world. Good-bye."

Impulsively she held out her hand, and he raised it to his lips, reverently but with a firm movement which she could not resist. The portières rustled behind them.

"Mrs. Exton wishes her wrap," said Minnerly in the doorway. "Have you seen—?"

"Yes, I can find it," interrupted Exton, and went out.

"It is stifling here," faltered Barbara. "Isn't the piazza pleasanter?"

"That depends, I suppose, on one's company," insinuated Minnerly suavely.

Barbara sat down on the piano-bench. Her wits were lame, and she felt a strange physical weariness.

"You may be interested in knowing," she said, "that I am leaving here tomorrow. Mrs. Exton's health—"

"Where will you go?" asked Minnerly. "What will you do? You must give me your answer tonight, Barbara. Don't you see how happy we can make our lives together? Don't you hear the call of Fitz Harding's happy valley?"

She half closed her eyes and he bent closer. He did not guess that she was looking into the crystal-white purity

of an operating-room. A square-jawed surgeon and his helpers, in their snowy aprons, worked with the precision of steel machines at the glass table, fighting for a life against the most murderous, most treacherous of foes. Their faces were set like the grim faces of seasoned soldiers; they hissed their words coolly; the room was a battlefield.

"Don't you see the happy valley?" persisted Minnerly. "I can make the world very happy for you, Barbara."

Barbara lifted her head proudly. "I am going over my mountain, too," said she.

"Over the—" Minnerly's voice failed him in his uncertainty.

"I am going back to the hospital," she declared. "It hurts me to distress you, but I must be frank. I shall not—quit."

"Exton's slang!" wildly blurted Minnerly, losing all control and bringing down his knuckles on the ivory keys. "I saw the vulgar cad kissing your hand. Your lover sends you where he chooses."

Barbara rose slowly. She wondered now why she had ever hesitated over this man. The evil suggestion in his weak, tremulous eyes branded her cheeks.

"I have no lover," she exclaimed passionately. "Mr. Exton has sent me away—out of the valley. I shall never see him again, nor, I hope, you. Shall we go to the piazza?"

"You are throwing away happiness," he cried.

"I am throwing away make-believe happiness, the false happiness of one of your stories," she said. "But this is a story told honestly to its ending."



## A SUGGESTION

**H**E—My dear, we are living extravagantly. Here are menus for how to live on thirteen cents a day.

**S**HE—Beautiful; but we'd save more money if they found out how to play the races for that.

## ABÉLARD TO HÉLOÏSE

BID me not stay! Ah, love, my faltering soul  
 Lurks o'er the chasm fell,  
 And only thou, my sweet, canst keep it whole—  
 Or plunge it down to hell.

Tempt me no more! Thy beauty is my shame;  
 Priest that I am, I plead  
 A moment's glance to fend thy luring fame—  
 Love, wilt thou never heed?

Kiss me again—just once! Ah, sweet, not now  
 For me the cell, the prayer;  
 Cling to me—close! Be faith, and life, and vow,  
 Be heaven, and bid me there!

ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS



## A SURE THING

“HA! ha!” chortled a loud-voiced man, slapping Grimshaw on the back,  
 “I’ll bet ten dollars you don’t remember me!”  
 “You win!” returned Grimshaw coldly, as he passed on.



## NOTHING UNUSUAL

HEWITT—Did Gruet marry for love?  
 JEWETT—Yes, but it was unrequited affection; he can’t get hold of his  
 wife’s money.



THE successful lawyer was heard to say that cases alter circumstances.

# THE APPRECIATORS: A WOOING

By Zona Gale

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

A YOUTH . . . . . (*whose face is not as the faces of other men.*)  
A MAID . . . . . (*whose face is not as the faces of other women.*)  
A MAN . . . . . (*with a dead soul.*)  
A WIDOW.

Chorus of Poets, Dead Souls, Widows, etc.

SCENE I—*Veranda of a country clubhouse by the sea.*

THE MAID—Oh, the day is beautiful, the day is beautiful! I will go out and mix with the day and breathe its wine.

THE MAN—Take me; otherwise I shall sit here drinking whisky-and-sodas and spoil my complexion. Where are your golf-sticks?

THE MAID—Oh, let there be no golf on this imperishable day! Let there be nothing—nothing but sweet air and white wind. One would think you were an athlete.

THE MAN (*abashed*)—So one would. Well, let's walk to the Cove and eat thousands of steamed clams.

THE MAID—Oh, the day, the day! The sweet, gold day with its unutterable caves of air! (*They walk away.*)

THE WIDOW (*plaintively, in a ham-mock*)—Will no one amuse me?

THE YOUTH (*gazing out at sea*)—Oh, to be in a boat, under a purple sail, sun-smitten! Oh, to be in a boat—

THE WIDOW (*petulantly*)—With me?

THE YOUTH (*recalled abruptly*)—Yes, with you. With something that is like all beauty, and all calm, and the wisdom of dead ages.

THE WIDOW (*bitterly*)—Thank you. Personally, I prefer live tact to dead

wisdom. One would think I were the obelisk. Find me a fan.

THE YOUTH—Let us walk. Let us go down to the sea and watch, through warm hours, for Proteus.

THE WIDOW—Mercy! Do you believe in sea-serpents? You're stepping on my dress. How awkward you are!

THE YOUTH—See where, prone in the labyrinthine light, float purple dreams, waiting to be quickened into thought! Behold how— (*They walk to the sea.*)

SCENE II—*The Shifting Sands*

## CHORUS OF POETS

Come early, song, come early, lute,  
For love is of your doing;  
In livery of silver air  
Come dress the wind for wooing.

## CHORUS OF DEAD SOULS AND WIDOWS

Bright eyes, ripe lips,  
Oh, the hours are flying,  
With here a kiss and there a kiss  
And every care a-dying. . . .

THE WIDOW—What a bully day—

THE MAID—Divine! Oh, fairy-like!

THE WIDOW (*severely*)—I beg your pardon. I never speak of a day being bully unless it is bully for some good

reason. One would think I were a weather bureau. I was about to say, what a bully day for bathing.

THE MAN—Out of sight. You're going in?

THE WIDOW—I am if I can get someone to teach me to swim.

THE YOUTH—To swim, to swim! To float upon the sea's breast of turquoise and jade! To lie——

THE MAN (*to the WIDOW*)—Let me teach you to swim. I can teach you in three lessons. (*Moves to her side.*)

THE MAID (*softly to the YOUTH*)—Oh, do you not see the white gulls flying before the gray of the ghoul-like clouds?

THE YOUTH (*gazing at the MAID as at one awakened*)—Aye, I see.

THE MAID—So flees my soul. Oh, the day is beautiful and lonely, beautiful and lonely. So flees my soul. Oh, oh!

THE YOUTH—And mine, and mine! (*Moves to her side.*)

THE WIDOW—Good gracious, both my shoes are full of sand!

THE MAN—Allow me.

THE WIDOW—You can't. We haven't a shoe-horn.

THE MAN—But you can't walk with your shoes full of sand.

THE WIDOW—Well, if you're sure——

### SCENE III—The Club Dining-room

THE MAN—What excellent bluefish!

THE WIDOW—Adorable bluefish!

THE MAN—Where's Louis? There he is. The best waiter I've ever had. Nobody else remembers how I take my coffee.

THE WIDOW—Without sugar? And after your benedictine?

THE MAN—You remember—you! . . . Or how I like my salad dressing——

THE WIDOW—Lots of oil and a very little vinegar?

THE MAN—Mrs. Wilythorn! Gertrude——

(*Another part of the dining-room.*)

THE YOUTH—Now silverly upon the sleeping waters lies the tired moon!

THE MAID—This is the hour of the autopsy of the day.

THE YOUTH (*uncertainly*)—The autopsy?

THE MAID—The autopsy. It's my own idea. Don't you think it a sweet one? It seems to me that it is the hour when the dead day is lying in state.

THE YOUTH—How fitting! How one longs to spend one's life coining fair words to throw in Nature's lap.

THE MAID—Oh, the sweet, black night and the apparent stars!

THE YOUTH—The evident moon!

THE MAID—The incontrovertible air.

THE YOUTH—I can see the purple in the dark. Can you see the purple in the dark?

THE MAID—Yes. And I can see other purples in other darks.

THE YOUTH—My Beautiful! Lift up your eyes!

THE MAID—I can see you. Oh, oh!

THE YOUTH—No word need be spoken? We need no words, my darling!

THE MAID—Be careful! The waiter——

(*Lights are lowered. They perceive that dinner is over and all the other guests have left the room. Consume soup, and exeunt.*)

### SCENE IV—The Golf Course

(*The WIDOW and the MAN are discovered sitting absently on a bumper.*)

THE WIDOW—Best beloved, do you see that white cloud far, far up in the blue heavens?

THE MAN—Best beloved, yes!

THE WIDOW—That cloud was like my soul—alone on its perilous journey, until the blue sky of your love received it.

THE MAN—But the great, big, blue sky was very lonely without its little cloud!

THE WIDOW—And, best beloved, do you see that white sail far, far out at sea?

THE MAN—Best beloved, yes!

THE WIDOW—As lonely as that sail



has been my soul, O my heart, until it found this blessed haven!

THE MAN—Oh, happy, happy haven to have welcomed this little angel ship!

THE WIDOW—Oh, the beautiful world!

THE MAN—The beautiful world!

*(Another part of the Links.)*

THE YOUTH *(applauding long drive of the MAID)*—Magnificent!

THE MAID *(panting enchantingly)*—No, don't stop. Come on. We must finish before luncheon.

THE YOUTH—What a good fellow you are! You do everything well.

THE MAID *(while the ball is being located)*—So do you. I try to keep up.

THE YOUTH—Tell me something, dearest. When did you first know that you loved me?

THE MAID—Shall I tell you? It was when I saw you working, with your hands all oily, the day the motor broke down. What made you first love me?

THE YOUTH—Shall I tell you? Well, dear, I think it was the way you made your little brother mind.

*(Indistinguishable chorus of Poets, Dead Souls and Widows.)*

(CURTAIN.)



## THE COMING OF NIGHT

THE last sun-glories are  
Into vast dimness gone;  
Night, busy at her dawn,  
Begins it with a star.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.



## A SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

THE LOVER—You see, ma and pa are opposed to me, but the girl isn't.

FRIEND—You're all right. You're going to be elected by an overwhelming minority.



## CLASSIFIED

KNICKER—And was the love letter Exhibit A?

BOCKER—No, Exhibit Jay.

## THE MAGIC FLUTE

A THRUSH is singing in the walnut tree,  
 The leafless walnut tree with silver boughs;  
 He sings old dreams long distant back to me,  
 He sings me back to childhood's happy house.

Oh, to be you! triumphant Voice of Gold,  
 Red Rose of Song above the empty bowers  
 Turning the withered leaves, the hopes grown cold  
 To springtide's good green world of growing flowers.

Might the great Change that turns the old to new  
 Remold this clay to better blossoming,  
 I would be you, Great Heart, I would be you  
 And sing like you of Love, and Death, and Spring.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.



## PLACING HER

SHE—Isn't she some relation to Tom Jinks, the comedian?  
 HE—Sure! She's his second wife once removed.



## SHE'D HAVE TO STAY ALL WINTER

ELLA—I'm not going away from here until I'm engaged.  
 STELLA—But the place isn't open the year round.



THE still, small voice of conscience would need a megaphone to attract the  
 attention of some people.

# THE BRACELET

By Demetra and Kenneth Brown

PERHAPS this story would sound less improbable were you hearing it under the conditions under which I heard it.

He was a grizzled English physician, his youth and his health left in India, who told it to me; and we were driving over the darkest roads through the blackest night during the worst of a storm in Virginia. The rain came down in sheets at times and again was held back in the heavy clouds overhead. Now and then we would lose the road entirely and strike the forest trees, denser, not blacker, than the rest of the night. We ran up banks and among the underbrush, with its waiting showers of water, and once turned over so far that I thought my companion had fallen out. I called to him and he answered at my side, his legs swung around over the wheel so as to land on his feet if we completed the upset. The mare, used to rough cross-country riding, answered the touch on the rein, no matter whither it led; nor for a long while would she comprehend that we were trying to trust to her intelligence and that the restraint of the reins was merely to keep down her speed.

Under these conditions the Indian physician, with his cultivated English intonation, told me the story. When the torrent of rain came down for a few minutes he gasped for breath; when it subsided into a drizzle he took the telling up again. A lightning flash revealing a quarter of a mile of shining road before us would make our minds easy for the minute. Again the warning slaps of drooping branches, as we swerved too far to right or left, punctuated the story with shower-baths.

Perhaps, as I have said, the setting lent credibility to what he told me that night. It seems improbable enough now. My friend believed it—at least during the telling. I cannot pretend to give the local color nor the expressions in the vernacular, which added so much to its picturesqueness. But here it is as well as I am able to repeat it.

It began on a night much like this, in India, only there was more of the lurid and uncanny in the storm. The storms of India are not the studied and catalogued hydrostatic affairs of our American weather bureau. They have more of the mysterious, the terrifying. Passing over the Indian jungles, they borrow of their unknown dangers. In American storms we have flying planks, cars overturned, houses unroofed and trees uprooted—all hard, material facts. In Indian storms there is a feeling of snakes and of poison, of vampires and of tigers roaming. Imagination as well as sense is overwhelmed.

On such a night in such a storm a child lay dying in an English bungalow. Bitterly they had fought for life against the climate; but now all was at an end. Even the doctor, my friend, then a young man, had gone out of the room, had given up the fight. He saw the mother and mutely shook his head. It was not a night for giving false hope or for conventional, consoling phrases.

And the mother knew—knew that the last of her three sons, all born here in India, was lost to her; knew that henceforth her life was desolate, no matter what honors her husband might reap, what friends they might make. And

she went into the room with the stiffening body of her baby and cursed her life and her God, as if she would force her child's life from Him with the vehemence of her passion.

Robert, her husband, came into the room. He went up to her and would have comforted her, but she repulsed him so fiercely that he turned from her to the bed where their son Philip lay. With yearning tenderness he lifted the lifeless form in his arms, and going out into the other room, walked back and forth, back and forth with it pressed against his breast, as he would have done had it been in pain and he trying to soothe it, talking to it the while and telling it of the love he bore it. It was an unnatural night, and nothing else seemed unnatural.

Even this sight did not move Helen, the mother. She stared straight and hard-eyed in front of her now; and laughed—laughed as she thought of all her dreams when she had come a bride to India; laughed as she thought of her mother-hopes, of God when He had seemed good, of the world when it had seemed beautiful.

The *ayah* of the boy Philip, an old woman from the jungle, crept softly into the sitting-room, where the father was keeping up his ceaseless walk. She waited, as an animal waits, afraid, before venturing farther. He did not see her, and moving on again, with noiseless, alert steps, the old woman crept past him, on into the other room. She spoke Helen's name, softly, once, then again and again. Over and over she repeated it in musical monotony, like the soft cathedral chime of a clock. At last she touched her arm, and Helen turned her dry, hard eyes to her.

"I know a man, a holy man, a *yogi*," the old woman said quietly; "I have seen him do much, when the doctors of the English could do naught. He is a holy man, a *yogi*, and his prayers avail. Water turns to milk, as it touches his lips, and affords him sustenance." The soft sibilant voice, on its even key, at last began to gain the attention of her mistress. "If the *mem-sahib* would go to him, and pray him

to bring back the life that is gone, even yet the Fates might be made to relent and give back the child."

Helen sprang to her feet, in her eyes a wild light of emotion that was near insanity. The servant hastened to fetch a cloak with a hood for her, and together the two women went from the house into the black, streaked storm.

It was near morning when they came back. By what means Helen had moved the *yogi* to come with her she never told; perhaps she did not know. Never before had he gone into the house of an Englishman, never had he thought of saving an English life. He took the child from the father's arms—the man half protesting, till he caught sight of the frantic hope in his wife's face—and sat with it alone, in the little room where it had died. At daybreak he came out, and it was as if only the husk of a man emerged, tottering feebly through the doorway, and went back to his hut in the depths of the jungle. And behind him followed the feeble wail of a child, which was to its mother's ears what nothing else on earth had ever been.

To the physician, when he saw and heard, it was one of those things that are not explained in India. The ordinary Englishman, over his brandy-and-soda, says, "Rum beggars!" when he does not understand the natives, and the phrase is as much of an explanation as has been given some things. It was a miracle to the young physician; and miracles were out of his line. The father, with easy buoyancy, thought that the child had never died. He sought long for the *yogi* to reward him, but never found him. And Helen—what she thought she did not say. She never forgot, and, remembering, perhaps understood a little of Philip and Philip's life.

On Philip's arm the *yogi* had left a bracelet of dull gold in the form of a snake, coiled lovingly around the little limb, its neck arched and the wide-open mouth pressed close against the

flesh, as if the fangs were buried deep in it. Philip's father started to take it off one day, after the boy was fully restored to health, but the mother, gentlest of wives, flew at him as if the life of her son were threatened, and Robert, good-natured, bullying Englishman though he was, accustomed to having his own way and pooh-poohing women's whims, desisted. Perhaps he, too, felt a touch of superstition about the bracelet; perhaps he only wished to avoid quarreling over a little thing, if quarrel Helen would instead of submitting as usual. As for the old *ayah*, she regarded the bracelet with a reverence that perhaps affected the whole family.

To the touch the bracelet felt soft and yielding; the spring within it must have been of marvelous quality. The snake wound itself half a dozen times around Philip's arm, and, as he grew, accommodated itself to the growing muscles. When he was several years older Helen tried to recall just how large it had been in the beginning. It seemed to her that it still coiled as many times around the arm as it had the night the *yogi* left the house—as if it had grown with the growing boy. Yet that must have been mere fancy. A very little loosening of the coils would have given ample room for growth.

The bracelet was never taken off. Even when Philip was sent "home" to school it was not touched. Once his playmates, inspired by the mischief of the young, began teasing him about it, and attempted to take it off. Philip had not answered them, but into his violet eyes had come so strange, so unearthly a look that it had influenced even their unpsychic spirits, and with curious embarrassment they had turned to other things. This effect of his look was the more remarkable, since the most salient characteristic of the boy was his absolute naturalness. There was nothing of the weird and uncanny about him, as there often is in children brought up under circumstances differing from the ordinary. The very perfection of his normality

was remarkable; he did what was expected of him; he learned his lessons; he went in for the boyish sports of the school; to the ordinary observer he was the incarnation of healthy-minded naturalness. Yet there was something behind all this which no one discerned except his mother, and she rather felt it than discerned it. It was a lack of humanness in him. It was as if the ordinary springs of good and bad had been left out of him. His goodness was almost that of an automaton; yet from his eyes at rare times shot the rays of a soul which denied the theories I have just been writing. From the depths of those sombre eyes there shone something that promised what his life never fulfilled.

We often speak of our body as if it were a mere imperfect machine in which our soul is imprisoned, yet none of us can separate the strands of the physical and the psychical—hardly one of us who is not influenced by the physical aspect of our neighbors. More than that, in ourselves the soul and the body react on one another. The beautiful soul in the imperfect body—what does it do except, in a measure, transform the physical through which it works? As radium gives to objects about it its luminous quality, so the soul, after awhile, transforms the molecular arrangement of the body. Who that has lived more than the first few years of life has not seen the souls working on the bodies they inhabit, for good or for ill? Have we not seen the common in appearance growing refined and really beautiful, through their souls? And again, have we not seen the physically beautiful sink to the level of their own souls, into coarseness, hardness and commonplaceness?

Yet with Philip it was as if indeed his body and his actions were entirely unconnected with the soul that sometimes looked out of his eyes. Only in them was he different from the ordinary, well-bred, well-fed young English animal. In his eyes were strange lights and questionings. And men and women who were of the kind that understood were attracted to him—



sought to come near him; yet they always went away baffled, believing that they had been mistaken and that the eyes, too, were merely a physical trick aping the glances of the soul; for even the most tongue-tied of those "*qui sentent leurs âmes*" can at times speak what is in them, when sympathy helps them. But Philip never spoke the things his eyes looked. His soul had only one vehicle of expression, and it was too subtle alone to meet the souls of others.

To India, the land of the things that are not understood, Philip brought his wife Esther. She suited the land. She was not understood, was not understanding. She had looked into Philip's eyes, and her own had answered the question in his. Many women, some of them much older than he, had been attracted by Philip; to not one of them had he given a word of greater warmth than he gave to the rest, until Esther came. People said it was an ideal match, this tall, tawny-haired Indian, with his violet eyes, and the slender, dusky-haired daughter of a poet and of a woman from Italy, whose dark eyes were the eyes that can suffer. And when she came to India she did suffer. Philip's mother, and his mother alone, noticed that when he passed Esther she shivered with—what was it? Not fear—was it longing? And she saw that those lights in his eyes, which the few perceived and wondered at, and the many did not notice, seeing no farther than his actions, became more frequent, when his look fell upon his wife.

Upon an afternoon a neighbor came to visit Esther, bringing her baby, with motherly pride. From the unknown horizon a muttering storm was approaching, and when it was so near that the tree-tops began whipping the air in terror the neighbor, with her child, hurried home. When she was gone Helen came and put her arms around Esther and said to her: "Daughter mine, are you not some day going to gladden my old heart with a baby like that?"

Passionately Esther turned upon Helen, as upon a foe. "I am not his wife," she said, and her tone was hard with the hardness of long grief. "I bear the title, but I am not his wife." Then her tone changed, and flinging her arms around Helen she cried brokenly: "I love him! I love him! I would rather be his mistress than be as I am now! You know the passionate tenderness a good woman feels—you do not know the passion a bad woman can feel—I have them both for Philip, and in return——"

As she was speaking Philip came out of the door on the veranda and passing by his wife he cast on her a look—what wonder that Esther's heart and all her emotions were stirred!—a look as of an imprisoned soul seeking its deliverer. She half started after him into the storm, yet stayed herself, and again turned to Helen.

"And the bracelet on his arm," she went on passionately. "What is it? It is as if it mocked me! Once, when first I knew him, we were playing tennis and his sleeve was rolled up, and I asked him. He did not answer me. He only looked at me; and that instant I fell in love with him. I thought—oh, mother!—I thought that his spirit cried out to mine—that he needed me. I thought I saw his soul—that it was in bondage and I alone could free it. I am very silly. I believed in destiny, and it seemed my fate had come—that I and I alone could help him. And now"—her voice sank to a pathetic whisper—"he does not need me. We have never been really married." After a pause she went on sadly: "I could bear it—could be happy, happy as most women are—if it were not for his eyes. They lash me, they goad me, they tantalize me! There is something in them that will not permit me to rest in calm—that will not allow me to forget and be quiet. They lead me on—I *know* I shall some day come near him!"

With heavy rolling thunder the storm and the night had come on. To both women the storm lashing the firmament was nothing to that within

their breasts, so great is the human heart. They did not think of seeking more shelter than that of the veranda where they were. The fury of the elements was only a muffled echo of their heart-beats. And there, in a fitting setting to the story, Helen told Esther of that other storm when the spirit seemed to have gone out of the young body of Philip and had then been brought back to him.

"I don't know what happened that night. I don't know what power the *yogi* invoked. Yet always to me since Philip has been different from other children. No one else has seen it. A mother and a wife alone know it. I had hoped, when he was married—when children would come tugging at his heart-strings—" The tears came to Helen's eyes that this hope was gone. "What is it?" she cried, clasping the girl tremblingly to her. "I can do nothing. What is it he needs? You—you alone can do anything. The way he looks at you—the way you tremble at his look——"

In the lashing of the storm it seemed as if the words were swept from the lips and that the thoughts went from heart to heart without words. Esther clung to Helen, and both women clinging thus saw Philip returning out of the wild blackness. He went into the house, and as he passed again he cast upon his wife the strange compelling look he had given her in going forth. Esther caught her breath in a quick sob and her hand pressed against her heart. She trembled, as always she trembled when her husband's glance rested thus upon her. She got up and followed him into the house. But, quickly as she had followed, he had already passed into the little inner room when she was through the door; and when again she followed she found him lying on the bed, every line of his body betokening lassitude, almost somnolence. His eyes alone seemed awake, and they drew her toward him with irresistible power.

She looked at the snake coiled about his bared arm. And it, too, fascinated her, as if there were some mysterious connection between the snake and her husband. All her life seemed to be drawn into her fingers and she reached forth, for even as she loved her husband so she hated the bracelet and its mysterious, baleful influence, which seemed to her to be fighting against her love. A terrible jealousy welled up in her heart. She hated it with burning intensity. She thought of her life wasted. The pride of the woman scorned, of the wife neglected, rose and swamped every other feeling. She was half demented; and again looking into the eyes of her husband in ceaseless search she saw an even newer light, which thrilled yet terrified her, as if at last the yearning question of his glance were to receive its answer; as if at last the bondage of his soul were to be cast aside—and through her.

Esther's eyes devoured those of her husband; and at the same time, as if it were unconsciously, she put forth her hand toward the snake. Philip, half smiling, moved his arm toward her, and raised his head to her, his lips to hers. And as lips clung to lips in passionate embrace, Esther's hand slipped along his arm to the bracelet, and as her lips left his she tore it from his arm almost with the fury of one strangling a deadly enemy.

In the height of the dreadful storm, when men seek the solace of fellow-men and even the brutes cower together in fearful amity, Helen and Robert came into the little inner room. Robert carried a lamp against the blackness of the storm, and Helen clung to him in fear of she knew not what. And in the little room the murky light of the lamp fell on the form of Esther senseless on the floor, her hand clasping the bracelet of the *yogi* with its glittering jeweled eyes; while on the bed in waxen pallor lay the form of a little child as it had lain there years before.



## THE ARISTOCRAT

WHO feels within his veins the throbbing pulse  
 Of power and purpose urging him to dare,  
 And, yielding to the message, treads down fear,  
 Rending in scorn his own innate despair,

He is the nobleman! No accident  
 Of ancestry can equal that fine birth  
 Of spirit which unlocks the dormant soul  
 And rounds endeavor to its highest worth.

CLINTON DANGERFIELD.



## A DISAGREEABLE TYPE

"IS he a valuable member of society?"  
 "No. He's worth millions, but not to society."



## HER MASTERPIECE

"YOUR wife has made quite a name as an authoress. Which do you consider  
 the best of her latest works?"  
 "Writing me a cheque for ten dollars."



## WEARY

FIRST SUBURBANITE—They say it takes three hundred years to make a  
 lawn.

SECOND SUBURBANITE—Well, sometimes I feel as if I'd been working a  
 lawn-mower about as long as that.

# AFTER SEVEN YEARS

By N. Porter

“SEVEN years!” he said thoughtfully. “Yes, it’s a long time—seven years tomorrow.”

His companion acquiesced, but with a soft laugh that rang out on the darkness as the tinkle of a silver bell. The period he named was, as he said, a long one; there she agreed, but rather as if in acknowledging it as such she discerned a termination essentially different from the one he did. He maintained that its very length testified to his constancy, that the fact that he was still engaged to Winnie Merryweather at the end of it signified that he still loved her. And he had never seen her in the meantime! Here it was that his present companion’s laugh fitted in. How could he tell then, she asked herself—she had even gone so far as to ask him—whether or not he still loved Winnie Merryweather?

For this was not the first time they had threshed the subject out between them. Far from it; they seemed, in fact, to have been in the process of threshing it out ever since he came on board and confided in her—the two things happened almost simultaneously; but the worst of it was that they never apparently made any progress. She always ended in laughing, and he by telling himself that if he was not angry it was only because she showed herself too frivolous to make it worth his while. So that, this being their last night together, it was inevitable that they should set to work to thresh it out for the last time, and that at the end of two minutes she should laugh, that he should bite his lip and deem her frivolous.

“Shall I never convince you?” he asked her presently.

“Oh, I don’t know about that,” she replied lightly. “Never is a long day. It is always on the cards that you might.”

“We reach Plymouth tomorrow,” he continued in a bolder tone. “Pendleton is only twenty miles from there, so I shall be home tomorrow afternoon. Tomorrow evening then I shall fix my wedding day.”

“Shall you?”

He could feel rather than see the skeptical arching of her eyebrows.

“Yes,” he said decidedly; “and we shall be married in about a week’s time.”

“And then you shall convince me by bringing her to see me.”

He started. This was a good enough method; of course, he could not ask for a better; but somehow or other it had never entered his calculations. He had never foreseen her and Winnie Merryweather together; he did not exactly see them now.

“And supposing—” She put her hand on the deck rail, leaned her head on it and peered up at him with a demon of mischief in her grayish green eyes. “Just supposing it should not come off; that, say, in three weeks’ time you should not find yourself married, would you come and see me all the same?”

“Yes—” He hesitated, not seeing any way out of it. “Of course I shall be married, but anyhow I will come.”

“Tuesday, then; Tuesday in three weeks’ time.” She booked it gaily and he found himself obliged to acquiesce.

Oh, yes, she was a frivolous woman;

there was no doubt about it in his eyes; meanwhile he was a little puzzled to know why she had the capacity to make him so angry.

Seven years! Why, they two had hardly known each other that figure in weeks. She was a widow of some three years' standing and he an Englishman who had gone out to seek a fortune in the Colonies, and, unlike the rest of his kind, had succeeded in finding it. She had worn her widowhood well; it had never cost her very much. But she had never wished to change her state till the day this handsome, sulky-looking Colonial came on board.

Then, though she called him egotistical—they all were that; bumptious—well, perhaps rather more than most—and self-confident to a point of stupidity, she surrendered her heart to him while all the time he prated of Winnie, the yellow-haired daughter of a parson, who waited for him in a remote village in Devonshire.

At the start she had disliked Winnie Merryweather, but that was before she had made sure of her own powers. She was not exactly sure of them now; that was the worst of it, she could not make sure. It was all very well to dislike Winnie Merryweather, to pity her, but she found she reckoned without her own imagination. How perpetrate the robbery she intended when confronted with such a picture of a faithful, yellow-haired, weeping Winnie as her mind continued to present her with? No, it was herself, not Winnie, she had eventually come to pity. Winnie should keep her lover while she— At this point she laughed again. Surely the fate that destined him for Winnie was a little malicious, or why should he be thus permitted to dwell continually on his constancy to another woman, and that other woman be placed out of the position to read him a lesson?

"I was thinking,"—so she explained her laugh. "Things are always funny when you think about them seriously."

And she continued to smile as she noted the sulky lengthening of his upper lip, and saw that she had suc-

ceeded in annoying him more than usual.

"Do you ever think about anything seriously?" he asked her a trifle wearily.

"Sometimes," she nodded. "That's just when I find matters so delightfully funny."

He shook his head. On the subject of a saving sense of humor he disdained to argue. Why should he? First of all, the situation required no saving, and if it had, hers was hardly the best method of saving it. No, on this last evening she was merely proving herself what he had often thought her, a mere trifler, a butterfly, and so—his eyes wandered to her shoes and stopped his train of reasoning. They were the daintiest little French kid shoes in the world and surmounted by the daintiest pair of open-work silk stockings. It was annoying, therefore, to be obliged to remember that because Winnie wore thick boots, laced and generally muddy, thick, muddy boots were preferable as footgear. Now that he had come back rich, Winnie might have as many pairs of French kid shoes as she liked; yet, according to what he knew of her, he felt sure she would not like them. Winnie had, so to speak, been brought up on the thick boots regime, just as much as the woman beside him had been taught to regard open-work stockings and Louis Quinze heels as essential to her well-being—they were as much part of her as the thick boots were part of Winnie. He would not have it otherwise, and yet—he sighed—the French shoes were so very pretty.

"Sighing?" she taunted him; "sighing with only one short day in front of you?"

"I was making plans," he informed her mendaciously, and then because he was a poor liar or would not perjure himself further, he turned and asked her if she had made any.

"Lots," she answered glibly; "more than I can possibly carry out. First of all, I intend to go to Paris for a fortnight."

"To buy clothes, of course?"



She nodded. "Could a woman have a better reason for going to Paris?"

"And when you have bought them?"

"I shall come back to England and wai—" She hesitated for a second. "And wear them," she concluded triumphantly.

He smiled almost tenderly. Could any man help smiling at anything so femininely foolish? She was going to spend fourteen days in Paris; a whole fortnight of her life was to be devoted to the purchase of chiffons, and again the comparison was in favor of Winnie—Winnie, who could dress for a dance in twenty minutes and make a boast of it.

"Do they count for so much?" he said after a long pause. "Your Parisian frocks and hats, I mean?"

For a moment she did not answer. Then she looked up at him with her mocking smile. "Isn't it frivolous of me?" she said, anticipating him. "But then I always told you that I was a very frivolous person, didn't I, and—?" She broke off and stifled a very obvious yawn that said clearly that she did not think it worth while to exculpate herself further. "I'm awfully sleepy tonight," she concluded irrelevantly.

She was getting bored with his company; worse still, letting him know it. She had no right to be bored, he told himself, especially on their last night together; it put him at a disadvantage. Supposing—it was an odd supposition, but he allowed it to flutter through his mind—supposing he had fallen in love with her instead of Winnie Merryweather, would she still have maintained this indifferent attitude toward him? were those grayish green eyes capable of reflecting nothing but a half hostile skepticism tempered with levity? The sleeves of her chiffon frock fluttered in the breeze, the arms they revealed were white and shapely, the fingers long and slim. Suppose he took hold of those long, slim fingers and kissed them, kissed them till the diamond rings cut and burned into her flesh, what then? His cigarette splashed down into the water and he steadied himself by holding to the deck

rail. The supposition had suddenly taken the form of a temptation, a very strong temptation.

The clock in the cabin below struck ten, and he remembered, with a start of dismay, that it was now a recognized habit that they should sit up and talk to each other till eleven. An hour more then had to be spent in her company, an hour to contemplate the mysteries of her chiffon frock, to watch the moon rise and splash its light on her crinkled, waving hair, to note the varying expressions of her petulant, half-opened mouth and reconcile them with the inconsistent hardness of her gray-green eyes! An hour! He lit another cigarette, threw away the match with a gesture of contempt and told himself that he was not afraid.

And then—well, he was not disappointed exactly, but he felt as though his heroic decision not to surrender was rather thrown away when she yawned again and told him that she did not intend to give him the chance, that she was so tremendously sleepy that there seemed nothing for it but to descend to her berth. The sparkle in her eyes belied her words; she was not in the least sleepy. Why she pretended to be was another question, which he did not inquire into. She might, for all he knew, have the audacity to tell him she was bored, and if she did—

She rose, gathered up her silken skirts and laughed.

"I am thinking of Miss Brown," she explained. "She is watching us from over there. She will be so disappointed. Yesterday she told me she knew for a fact that you were desperately in love with me."

"And you?" For the life of him he could not help putting the question.

"Well, of course, I told her that I knew for a fact that you weren't."

"Oh!" He gasped, and he had not the slightest idea what he was going to say next, though fortunately she did not appear to think her statement required an answer. With a hasty "Good night" she disappeared down the stair-

way, but he could hear her soft laugh trailing behind her.

After a little he moved his chair, and, placing it beside Miss Brown, confided in her his love for Winnie, telling her of the seven years' separation in such a way that the romantic little spinster was soon moved to tears. This was, he felt, exactly what he wanted—a testimony to his constancy.

It was three weeks later, a spring afternoon, and the sunlight played on the green art carpet in her drawing-room.

She wore a gray crêpe de chine frock trimmed with pale blue and turquoises. He had bought the turquoises for her at Ceylon. Everybody bought turquoises at Ceylon, so he had explained his gift, and he had shown her the larger set he was taking to Winnie. Nevertheless she had hers mounted in Paris, and, sentiment apart, they made a very pretty belt.

She had new shoes on, too, new French ones, with higher heels than she had worn on board ship and a new pair of open-work silk stockings. She had, moreover, done her hair in a new French fashion, caught up high on the top of her head, while the remaining turquoises were set in tortoise-shell combs.

She looked at the clock and sighed. It was five minutes to four, and she knew he was nothing if not punctual. "I will give him ten minutes more," she said, "and then—then I will have tea."

But he came before the clock had finished striking.

He was taller than she seemed to remember him, taller and sulkier-looking. It was a good sign that he should come alone and look sulky, she thought.

"So you bought the clothes!" he began, as soon as they had greeted each other, and his eyes devoured every detail of her gray frock till they fastened themselves on the turquoises in her belt and remained there.

"Yes, I had them mounted immediately," she explained. "Didn't Winnie?"

He hesitated a moment. "No-o. Winnie didn't."

"That shows a want of proper appreciation on her part, for they are very decorative." She turned her head sideways so that he might admire the combs. "Don't you think so?"

He smiled a trifle grimly as he admitted that he did.

Then she handed him his tea, and to create a diversion suggested that he should admire her cups. "Chelsea," she said, "but they are not a quarter as good as those over the bookcase. I had to have the bookcase made on purpose to shelter them, and then"—she shrugged her shoulders—"there was nothing for it but to fill it with books."

It was a very *recherché* collection of books, however, if a trifle incongruous, and, though she was a frivolous woman by her own confession, it was evident she had a literary friend somewhere. He also wondered who had chosen the water-colors that adorned her walls, the only solution being that she had an artistic friend, too, a solution that somehow failed to please him.

"But you didn't come here to criticize my room," she told him after a slight pause; "you came here to talk of Winnie. Where is Winnie? I suppose—" for all her subtlety she could not help being direct now that it came to the point—"I suppose you are married?"

"No, I am not," he answered gruffly; "or, in fact, likely to be."

"Then you—" She broke off, and her heart refused to tell her whether she hoped or feared.

"I?" He raised his eyebrows in his old arrogant fashion. "I? Winnie, I may tell you, is now engaged to her father's curate, with whom she has apparently been in love for the last two years."

The curate? It surpassed her dreams. Whatever way she had turned she had seen no room for Winnie and herself; but that Winnie should also have appreciated that fact, that Winnie should have made the sacrifice of her own free will, should have given him

up to marry her father's curate! It was impossible, inconceivable!

"I need hardly tell you how sorry I am," she answered after a moment, for, with all her contempt for conventional manners, she could not tell him just then that her heart was singing for joy.

"Don't pretend," he said angrily. "You know you laughed at me on board ship; you are quite welcome to laugh at me now if you choose."

"Did I?" She smiled a little in the recollection, but she was quite grave and humble as she added, "Anyhow, I don't want to laugh at you now."

There was a long pause. "I want to tell you all about it," he went on at length; "that is to say, I wish you to know. When I got down there I saw it immediately, before I had been in the room with her ten minutes, and after dinner her father explained. He admitted that it was all her fault, and then he asked me, almost begged me to let her off. Whatever I wished, I could not possibly have done otherwise, could I?"

"No." She echoed him slowly. "Whatever you wished, you could not possibly have done otherwise. And he is a nice curate?"

"Very—as curates go. They play hockey together on Saturday afternoons in a mixed club. He says it gives him inspiration for his sermons."

"How you must envy him!"

"What?"

She deliberately rearranged her cushions before she repeated her remark. "How you must envy that curate!"

"I don't see that that follows," he growled.

"Oh, but it does," she maintained. "It wouldn't be human nature if it didn't. If you have thought of no other woman but Winnie Merryweather for seven years, it stands to reason that you must be a little envious of the man who marries her at the end of them."

He looked up, his suspicions re-

awakened. Was she daring to laugh at him now? "I didn't grudge the waiting," he said. "You know that."

"Exactly, and that is why I am so sorry for you now."

He got up and strode toward the door. He was a fool, he told himself. To ask bread of a stone was nothing to asking sympathy of a frivolous woman. Why had he come to see her, and told her everything, when he might have known all along she was thirsting for just such an opportunity to make him look ridiculous?

"Come back," she called out in her peremptory fashion; "I want to ask you something."

He hesitated with his hand on the door, and called himself a fool a second time for his hesitation.

"You have not yet told me if you are jealous of that curate."

The words mocked him, yet there was something in her tone that compelled him to turn to look at her, to find she was no longer seated, but had stood up to bury her face in a vase of daffodils on the mantelpiece.

"And if I am not?" A wild impulse moved him to put the question, to recross the room, and wrenching her hands off the vase to hold them tightly between his own as he waited for her answer.

"And if you are not—" she said softly, with a wonderful light in her grayish green eyes.

And then he took her in his arms and kissed her, kissed her as though he had been waiting seven years for that moment alone.

"But I should have gone back and proposed to Winnie in any case," he said as he let her go.

She nodded. "I should never have spoken to you again if you had not done so, only——"

"Only what?" he pleaded.

"Only considering you have been in love with me for the last seven weeks, was it quite necessary to go out of your way so often to assure me that you were not?"



## ARISTARCHUS

(THE MOUNTAIN IN THE MOON)

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

IT was long and long ago our love began;  
It is something all unmeasured by Time's span.  
In an era and a spot by the modern world forgot,  
We were lovers ere God named us maid and man.

Like the memory of music made by streams  
All the beauty of that other love-life seems.  
But I always thought it so, and at last I know, I know—  
We were lovers in the Land of Silver Dreams!

When the moon was at the full I found the place:  
Out, and out, across the seas of shining space,  
On a quest that could not fail, I unfurled my Memory sail,  
And cast anchor in the Bay of Love's First Grace!

At the foot of Aristarchus lies this bay.  
(Oh, the wonder of that mountain far away!)  
And the Land of Silver Dreams all about it shines and gleams,  
Where we loved, before God fashioned night or day.

We were souls in eery bodies, made of light;  
We were winged and we could speed from height to height;  
And we built a nest called Hope on the sheer moon mountain slope,  
Where we sat and watched new worlds wheel into sight.

And we saw this little planet known as Earth,  
When the mighty Mother Chaos gave it birth;  
But in love's conceit we thought all these worlds from space were brought  
For no greater aim or purpose than our mirth.

And we laughed in love's abandon, and we sang  
Till the echoing peaks of Aristarchus rang,  
As hot-hissing comets came, and white suns burst into flame,  
And a myriad worlds from out the darkness sprang.

I can show you when the moon is at its best,  
Aristarchus and the spot we made our nest.  
Oh, I always wondered why, when the moon was in the sky,  
I was stirred with such strange longings and unrest.

And I knew the subtle beauty and the force  
Of our love was never bounded by earth's course!  
So with Memory's sail unfurled, I went cruising past this world  
And I followed, till I traced it to its source.

# A MILLION DOLLARS

By Inez Haynes Gillmore

NO, I never go shopping. The reason why is a curious one, I guess you'll think, if you care enough to wait to hear about it. The beginning of the story goes back to before Mike and I were married. He had got his diploma from Harvard Medical three years before and had come to—of all places—New York to establish a practice. It was not establishing with just the speed that we desired, and as I earned, by newspaper stories, about enough to keep the wolf out of the backyard, it looked as if we'd get married just in time to celebrate our golden anniversary. I used to get awfully discouraged over the prospect, but Mike used to look at it in the most annoyingly optimistic way. He was as sure of success as of his appetite. And in the meantime we had a very good time—it's not such bad fun playing at poverty in New York, if you're young and there's a nice man about, and you're willing to have humble holidays—which was what we were.

Well, one fine morning I awoke to find the condition of affairs changed. It was one Saturday, I remember perfectly, and a beautiful spring day. There was one letter in my mail informing me, over the signature of my Uncle Henry's lawyer, that Uncle Henry had died and left me a million dollars. Think of it! One million dollars—one, comma, ought, ought, ought, comma, ought, ought, ought, period! Wouldn't that take your breath away? To say that I nearly dropped dead is putting it in the most delicate possible form. For a moment

I couldn't move. I had all the feelings that everybody says you have when you're drowning and all your life passes like a picture before you. First, I thought I was dreaming and then I thought I was insane.

I pinched myself and kicked myself; it didn't do any good. Then I went out and called Mike up on the 'phone and told him the news. Even that didn't dissipate my vision—that million dollars persisted. Mike said he'd take a day off and we'd celebrate. That's what we did, too—we spent every cent of money either of us had. I continued to be giddy. I knew the million dollars was a fact, but I was afraid I'd die young just as things were coming my way. I told Mike if he let an automobile run over me while we were crossing Broadway I'd come back and haunt him. I wouldn't take any risks that day—I wouldn't even go up in an elevator. I remembered that my father's sister died of heart disease, and one of my mother's uncles had consumption. I made Mike thump and whack and punch me until he convinced me that I was an anatomical wonder. Incidentally, I was black and blue, but I didn't mind that.

The funny thing about it was that I had always hated Uncle Henry like fun. He was the only rich relative I had on either side. I hated him as a child, I despised him as a girl and I simply loathed him as a woman. We never came into the same room without unpleasantness. How he ever came to leave the money to me beat me, although at the time I thought he might have done it in a sudden fit of



disgust with the gang of relatives, as long as the Fleischmann bread line, who were waiting for a dead man's shoes.

The lawyer had stated in his letter that, by special request of the dead man, a cheque-book would be put at my disposal immediately. It came in the next mail. Mike was pretty busy Sunday working on his second case in two months, and so I didn't see him until night. Then I proposed that we go right out and get married. He wouldn't. First he said that you had to have licenses and things like that, and anyway, even if you hadn't, he wasn't going to marry me until he could support me in the style to which I had been accustomed—that is, a woman in once a week to do the washing. Well, I said he made me tired, and if he was going in for that sort of thing he ought to refuse to marry me at all. I said he reminded me of Laura Jean Libbey and the Bowery melodrama, but it didn't make any difference. I resorted to argument—and I tell you I'm always desperate when I descend so low as that. I tried entreaties, prayers, anger, sarcasm, smiles, tears, smiles and tears mixed, and every other female wile that I could think of. He was as incorruptible as a dead politician. I was in despair. I threatened to marry the first fortune-hunter that asked me, all to no purpose. We had the most awful quarrel we have ever had—that night the million dollars came to me. In fact, I broke the engagement and gave him back his ring.

Well, Monday came, and I decided to go downtown and spend some of the money. I didn't know what I wanted—as a matter of fact I couldn't think of a living thing, now that I had all the money there was in the world. Things that I'd had my eye on in shop windows—and my nose, too; there had been a permanent misty spot on the glass for weeks in some cases—had now no more attraction for me than so many potatoes.

Halfway down in the car I thought suddenly of poor Marion

Tilton. She was a girl that I knew was simply crazy to go to college, and had never gone because her people couldn't afford to send her. I had always said that if I ever had a million dollars the first thing I would do would be to put Marion through college—even if she had one foot in the grave. She was one of that kind, don't you know, that is just bound to graduate with honors clinging to her degree as thick as barnacles—the kind that just naturally can't help standing at the head of their class in everything.

So I went in an automobile to her house. I told her that I had just become the female Monte Cristo of the universe—that the world was mine and I was It. And as proof thereof I intended to send her through college. Well, of course, she became crazy, too. First she said she wouldn't; then she said she couldn't; then she said, "I'll see."

Well, the long and short of it was that we sat down and figured up the expenses of a four years' course at the most liberal possible figure. I was determined that she should be the most decorative grind that ever struck Cambridge, and I gave her the clothes allowance of a Vanderbilt. When we added it all up we went downtown and I deposited my cheque for the whole amount. When she left me to go home Marion said that, strange as it might seem, she hadn't thanked me yet because she didn't know what to say—and she was still a bit dazed. But she intended to go home and, after sleeping on the matter—that is, if she didn't wake up in a padded cell—she meant to write me a letter. I felt as happy as a grig over the whole matter until night came and Mike didn't come to see me. It was the first day I hadn't seen him in three years. I realized then that it was all really over between us, and I went to bed and cried my eyes out.

In the morning I started to go shopping again, and then suddenly it came over me how selfish it would be to spend my first money on myself, when I had the whole rest of a life-

time and a whole million—less Marion's money—to spend in riotous living. Besides, I didn't care anything about owning things by that time. I had come to the conclusion that I would retire from the world anyway and devote myself to the poor and be known as the "angel of the alley," or something like that. Every time I thought of Mike I got so blue that I seriously contemplated walking over to his office and opening my jugular on his front steps.

The upshot of it was that I spent all Tuesday looking after an old couple that I knew and was fond of. The wife is practically a shut-in. She is really a woman of charming taste, but they are dreadfully poor and they have the same things that she started house-keeping with—old faded carpets, prehistoric white china and thin, darned table-linen. I telegraphed them that new housekeeping things were to arrive. I sent also three men down to take up the old carpets and store the furniture in the attic. Then I selected the things. I knew just what she wanted in everything—she had told me ever so many times—and I got every one of them, although it took some time to find the style of carpet she was crazy for, it having gone out of fashion about a decade ago. There were two things that I especially prided myself on. One was the dresser in her room, a lovely hand-carved white thing, and the other was the ice-chest, which was made of tiles. It was as big as a theatre and as pretty to look at. It took me two days to get the things in place, and at the end they were dying and I was dead; but we were all happy.

Now, I hate to seem to pose as a female Carnegie. I'm nothing of the sort—I'd no more give money to an institution than I'd throw it in the river. Women aren't such fools. But we all of us know a half-dozen people for whom we're simply yearning to do the right thing. Well, I got my chance in the next two or three days to do for my half-dozen, and I did for them. It was the more easy as I didn't hear a word from Mike, and I knew I

was going into a decline and might as well make my peace with the world.

Thursday and Friday I hunted out everybody I knew who needed a little help, and would accept it from me. I set up one decent lad in business—a great favorite of mine he had always been. I gave a tired business woman, an old friend of the family, money enough to go on a six months' trip in any direction she wished. Then there were a few young girls to whom I sent trinkets and materials for half a dozen ball gowns, some young mothers for whom I bought all kinds of pretty baby things, and some worn-out elderly women whom I provided with the little luxuries that they had been wanting for years. It sounds as if there were armies of them, but there were not more than a score really, although when I began to reckon I found that I had spent twenty thousand dollars. The only thing that bothered me was that many of them would persist in regarding the money I gave them in the light of loans, that they were determined to repay some time.

Friday night came and I was bluer than indigo. I had not once seen Mike. But late that night, when I was in bed, there came a special delivery letter from him. He said that he had been away on a very important case with some wealthy and influential people, and concluded: "Expect me tomorrow."

Maybe I wasn't happy then! I I couldn't sleep—my heart sang too loud. I got up about five. I was glad that I had attended to all my debts of charity, because I hadn't one unselfish impulse left in my heart. I knew there was going to be that day an outbreak of the feminine ego that would make things hum. The first thing I did was to go to a real estate man and buy a little house on Riverside Drive that Mike and I had always wanted. The price made me gasp, but I didn't haggle. In fact, I didn't ask a single question except what it would cost. Then I telephoned to a warehouse and engaged storage room. I also telephoned the Woman's Indus-

trial League to send an army of women to my new house to clean up and receive and place the things I was going to send there.

Then I started downtown and I bought things, and I bought things, and I bought things! In the first place, Mike and I know the real thing when we see it. Our afternoon walks in the last three years had always ended in some one of the millions of antique places that stretch in one long, ruinous line from West Side to East Side. There were things and things that we'd had our eyes on for ages, that had never been sold, that never would be sold, we knew, because there was nobody in New York but us who had the good taste to appreciate them. I chartered an automobile for an indefinite period, and I simply bought all those things. It took the whole day easily; in fact, I didn't bother about luncheon.

I bought, during the process, all kinds of furniture—Chippendale, Sheraton, Heppelwhite, French, German and Italian. I bought pictures enough to start an amateur gallery. I bought prayer rugs that would have made even the unregenerate cave-man pray. I bought barrels and barrels of china—old china and new china, china of every color, shape and nationality. I bought copper and brass, Tiffany glass and Dutch silver and enough Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Turkish stuff to fill a museum.

Then I went in for things to wear. I bought muslin by the piece, silk by the roll and velvet by the bale. I bought every dress material that I had ever liked—and plenty of it. I bought a set of every kind of fur. I bought gloves, shoes and stockings enough to last one woman for a decade. In fact, I shall go silk-hosed to my grave. I bought rings and brooches and necklaces and chains, of the only sort I cared for—the queer kind—until my eyes were dazzled. I nearly cleaned out the Oriental jewelry market.

In short, I bought everything that I had ever seen or wanted. I went through the shopping district like a

ferret. I sent some things to the house and some to the warehouse. In the midst of it, impelled by a prudent impulse that I can never explain, I deposited ten thousand dollars in the bank in Mike's name. When I got home that night I was nearly a wreck, but presently Mike came and I felt better.

The first thing he did was to put his ring back on my finger, and the first thing I did was to let him. Then I told him about what I had been doing during the week. When I told him about the first part of it tears came to his eyes and his voice grew choky, and when I told him the last part of it he nearly died of laughter. I showed him the account I had kept of my purchases that day and he added them up for me. I had spent—but of course this includes the house, you understand—two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. What do you think of that? I gasped when I heard it, but Mike howled.

While we were still talking the matter over a card was brought up to my room by my over-zealous landlady. It was Uncle Henry's lawyer's card. Mike and I went downstairs to see him. Well, I thought I was dreaming when I received his first announcement, the week before: I had no doubt that I was awake when I received his second.

It seems that the million dollars wasn't mine at all. To go back to the beginning, I had made the remark once, in Uncle Henry's presence, that I could do as much with a million dollars in a week as I could in a lifetime. Uncle Henry remembered the remark, and while he lay dying he thought up the plan of leaving me a million dollars for a week. His lawyers were instructed not to inform me of the truth until I had had the money exactly seven days.

I was pale with horror when I explained to the legal gentleman what I had done. But he told me that Uncle Henry had explicitly stated that I was to have everything I spent until the notice was served on me, but not one

cent more. Well, perhaps you can imagine my relief. Wasn't I glad I'd done something for somebody besides myself? Wasn't I glad I'd bought that house? Wasn't I glad I'd put that ten thousand dollars in the bank in Mike's name? It was rather a grim

joke for a dying man to play, wasn't it? But as it turned out I don't think the joke was on me exactly. It seems to be on the dozens of other nephews and nieces, among whom whatever I'd left was to be divided. But that's why I don't have to do much shopping.



## LES CORBEAUX

ILS rament au ciel froid, lents, bec rauque, œil chercheur  
 Apre à scruter les plis de la neige linceul,  
 Patiemment, au long des hivernales heures,  
 Les lourds corbeaux fouilleurs, les corbeaux éternels . . .

En l'aube de demain la vierge année nouvelle  
 Heurtera des crânes, des doigts morts sur son seuil,  
 Des crânes aux yeux creux, louchant vers d'anciens deuils,  
 Doigts défunts s'énervant aux loques du passé;  
 Car au ciel d'acier froid ils planent, inlassés,  
 Les lents corbeaux chercheurs, les corbeaux éternels . . .

Oh! j'avais fait neiger dans un ravin perdu  
 Au défilé le plus oublié de mon cœur,  
 Tombe d'amours défunts, tombe d'étranges heures,  
 Les flocons opiniâtres de l'oubli chenu;  
 Et j'avais aplani, douce pour les pieds nus  
 De l'année vierge et de l'espérance nouvelle  
 La voie blanche qui part de l'aube de demain . . .

Mais voici, ramant, lentes, au ciel froid, les ailes  
 Des fouilleurs de tombeaux, à l'œil tenace, humain  
 Des lourds corbeaux chercheurs, des corbeaux éternels! . . .

ANDRÉ TRIDON.



## ON THE HEIGHTS

"HOW much of a success has Smith made of journalism?"  
 "The very greatest. He is now where he can write articles advising others not to follow it."

## A TOAST

LET him who will drink to his love,  
 Or pledge a friend in wine;  
 A rousing toast I'll give to thee,  
 O enemy of mine!

Pour forth the amber liquid; fill  
 Your glasses to the brim;  
 Here's to the man whose heart for me  
 Bears naught but hatred grim!

How oft when steep ascents I climb  
 Would I cast down my load,  
 Did not his royal enmity  
 My lagging footsteps goad!

So drink again! your bumpers raise  
 And gaily clink with me;  
 Here's to the man who hates me well—  
 Down with "Mine Enemy!"

BLANCHE GOODMAN.



## VERY HARD

"MY first dollar was the hardest I ever made. It"—the counterfeiter was speaking—"was so darned brittle that it broke in three pieces when I dropped it on the floor."



## A POINT IN ITS FAVOR

PATIENT—But your treatment for obesity is so expensive.

DOCTOR—Madam, that is one of its strong points. You get worrying about the expense and it helps to work off the superfluous flesh.



# THE CIGARETTE

By Theodore Waters

STANDISH could not explain the peremptory impulse that made him forsake his club early in the evening and hurry home to his wife. Usually he stayed in the clubhouse until midnight, and his early departure called forth chaffing comments from his fellow-members. He was not impelled by that domestic conscience which occasionally drives men home early from clubs. He did not possess such a monitor. Mrs. Standish was a sweet-tempered young woman, of whom her friends said that she was "too good to be neglected by a man who thought more of his club than of his wife." But this opinion was not known to Mrs. Standish, who had voiced no complaint, nor to Standish, who did not realize his selfishness. No, this was just one of those uncontrollable impulses which take possession of us all at times, and, to do him justice, Standish did not attempt to reason it out.

Standish imagined his wife's surprise and wondered what she would say when he walked in upon her unexpectedly. She usually sat under the table-lamp—the lamp with the red shade that compelled a twilight glow throughout the room, except where the white rays escaped downward to her fancy work—interminable fancy work that never seemed to get finished. His mind became so full of the picture that, when he entered the sitting-room and found it silent and dark, the contrast was so sudden that he closed his eyes helplessly and seemed to feel the vision of his expectancy within his eyelids. Recovering, he walked cautiously into the darkness, and, much annoyed,

called out his wife's name querulously. There was no answer. That annoyed him all the more. Then he stumbled against a chair, sat down and began to think.

At first his thought was dull, almost characterless, in fact. But when some time elapsed and the gloom of the place began to oppress him, he became irritated. Where could she have gone? For the first time since his wedding Standish realized the integral part his wife was of his domestic life. Yesterday he would have defined home as an abode of which a wife might be the overseer. Now it had suddenly come to him that the wife and her atmosphere constituted the home, which might even exist without the abode. How *very* lonesome the place was without her! Where *could* she have gone? What *could* a woman want outside of her home? It was not just the thing, and he would tell her so, too. Really, she had never done this before, never. But hold! maybe she *had*, though. How did *he* know? He was seldom home before midnight, and perhaps—good heavens!—perhaps she had been making a practice of it. Well, he would wait and find out. He would put a stop to it. The tone of his thought became ominous. After fifteen minutes of waiting his attitude was grim. After thirty minutes it was threatening. After forty-five minutes it was still determined. But when the full hour had dragged by the stillness, the darkness and the luxury of the chair had coaxed his fatigue into sound sleep.

How long he slept Standish did not know. He was awakened by a feeling

of intense oppression such as follows a nightmare. But his sleep had been dreamless. He was confused and the darkness helped effectually to retard the quickening of his senses. So it was perhaps a full minute before he could claim complete possession of all his faculties and a minute thereafter before he could decide that what he then saw was not one of those strange visions which come to us on the borderland of wakefulness and sleep.

In the darkness near the middle of the room he saw a round object upon which a curiously dull light seemed to be playing in the most fantastic way. Wondering what it could be, Standish looked the more intently and saw with amazement that it was a man's face slightly illuminated by the fire of a cigarette which the man was calmly smoking. There could be no doubt of it; there was the alternate brightening and darkening of the features as the tip of the cigarette went white-hot with every puff and dull red between, and finally what looked like a tiny meteor falling in the darkness when the smoker suddenly took the cigarette from his mouth and dropped his hand apparently to the arm of his chair.

Standish was startled, but he made no sound. That he had a burglar to deal with he did not doubt; a cool, self-possessed burglar who could take his ease and smoke luxuriously in the apartment he had come to rob. He, Standish, must be careful. This came of his wife's going out while he was at the club. It would be a lesson to her. He peered into the darkness to get another view of the face, but except the very dim glow by the arm of the chair he could see nothing. He must wait until the man raised the cigarette to his lips. He wondered how he should dispose of the fellow, and supplicated fate to keep his wife away until the thing was over with. Just then he heard someone moving in another room, and presently the voice of his wife came faintly through the closed doors humming snatches of a love song. Good God! his wife had come in while he was asleep. He made ready to

spring upon the burglar, who would now, he thought, attempt to fly. To his further amazement, however, the fellow made not the slightest movement of alarm.

It was coolness personified and it almost got upon Standish's nerves. Nevertheless as he gathered himself for a mighty leap he laughed silently to think of the fellow's consternation when out of the blackness rushed the invisible force that would overwhelm him. It was dangerous, too, this springing on a man in the dark. But the advantage must all be on his side, and he waited only until the man should smoke again that he might get his bearings by the light of the cigarette.

Ah, the burglar was raising it to his lips. The dull red tip went white under the first puff. The stump was evidently growing short. It lighted up its owner's face brighter than before, particularly those overhanging features—the brows, the nose and the lips—to which the glow ascended as from miniature footlights. And Standish got his bearings, but he did not spring. For in the brighter illumination he recognized the face, and the recognition filled him with a suspicion so sickening that he sank back unable to move.

It was the face of Sheldon, his former rival, his wife's schoolboy lover, who had been so devoted to her before he, Standish, had come to her and with the glamour of his worldliness won her away; Sheldon, about whom he had chaffed her many a time because the fellow had taken the thing so seriously; Sheldon, who for long would not believe he had lost her, until at last she had been compelled to bid him good-bye, gently but firmly, whereupon with boyish impetuosity he had drawn her head down suddenly to him, kissed her on the forehead and rushed away to Mexico. Standish had been amused at the deep solemnity with which she had told him of this incident, just as he had been amused at her recital of certain other school-girl escapades about which "she felt he had a right to know." As a man

of the world he had patronized her innocence, accepting it as his right, as a credit to his acumen in choosing the proper kind of woman for his wife. And yet, after all his faith in her, after all her "innocence," she had been carrying on a clandestine affair with this fellow, admitting him to *his* apartment in *his* absence. Oh, the effrontery of it! Oh, the shame and the rage and the bitterness that possessed him in turn!

Yet he remained quiet, watching in the dark, trying to concentrate his scattered wits on a plan of action. This affair must be managed skilfully. Too much precipitation would spoil everything. Again he heard his wife humming the love song, and the thought that it was not meant for him almost sent him to his rival's throat. Again the cigarette moved up and down. Again it went white-hot and again he saw that face. There was no mistaking it. It was the face of Sheldon, beyond all doubt. The cigarette had burned so close to the man's lips that Standish could distinguish the expression of his face, which seemed to be one of settled apathy, even of pain. Standish did not reason out the why or the wherefore of it just then, but he noticed it particularly when Sheldon took the stump from his mouth and, turning it around until the tip pointed toward his face, looked long and deeply into its dying fire. And that expression haunted Standish long after the glow of the cigarette had died out entirely and he could no longer distinguish the form of his rival.

Standish now feared that Sheldon would light another cigarette, in which event his presence would be discovered when the match flared up. This was literally the last thing he wished to have happen, for he had an instinctive love of the melodramatic, and it was his plan to wait until his wife should come voluntarily into the room, when, without initiative on his part, these two would stand revealed face to face

in their perfidy. He waited there in the darkness for that moment with an immobility which in itself was intensely nervous.

The crackling of a match in the distant room startled him. Immediately afterward he heard his wife coming along the passage, and he knew by the light moving under the door that she was carrying the lamp. Good! It suited the situation. He would sit perfectly still and when the light swept around the edge of the opening door they would see how he had been a silent witness of it all. Then it would be his turn.

Slowly she came through the hallway, her dress swishing softly on the carpet. Back and forth the ribands of light darted under the door in unison with the motion of her body. Shorter and shorter became their wave-length as her near approach deprived them of horizontal leeway, and then suddenly the door swung open, flooding the room with red except where a heavy beam of white light fell down from beneath the lamp-shade held high above her head, singling her out from head to foot as with the glare of a calcium.

But the color effect had no charm for Standish. He jumped to his feet and gazed around wildly, frightening his wife so that she screamed piercingly and fell fainting to the floor, the lamp crashing at her side. For, during the momentary interval when his wife had stood with the lamp uplifted, Standish had seen that Sheldon—the man with the cigarette—had vanished—that he and his wife were the only living occupants of the room.

At breakfast next morning Mrs. Standish handed her husband a telegram from Guadalajara, Mexico, announcing the death of Sheldon. Standish made no audible comment, but to himself he said nervously:

"My God! To think I was going to jump on it in the dark!"



## THE WELCOMING

WE were alone what time you said  
 Your last farewell to me,  
 Ere yet you joined the happy dead  
 In their fair company.

God grant our meeting be like this  
 In heaven's loneliest ring,  
 Lest angels envy us the bliss  
 Of that first welcoming!

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



## IN THE NEAR FUTURE

"WEALTHY, isn't he?"  
 "Yes, but very eccentric. He has never endowed a college."



## GRAB HER!

ASKINGTON—Quite a clever girl, isn't she?  
 SAPSMITH—Clever? Why, she has brains enough for two!  
 "Marry her, old fellow! Marry her, as quick as you can!"



WHETHER it is a misfortune to go to the grave unsung depends somewhat  
 on the qualifications of the singer.

## ON WOMEN AND WINE

By Frank S. Arnett

THE day of the drunkard is gone. No longer has he the charity of his family, the sympathy of the night-watch or the gratitude of the cartoonist. Even a prince of the blood would now not dare, as did the Duke of Clarence, become so intoxicated as to be unable to open a ball at Windsor. It may once have been proper for the old-time country squires of Merrie England to be hauled to bed from beneath the table; and, doubtless, drunkenness agreed with the gigantic physique of the demigods. But that sort of thing means death to the nerve-racked American of today. At times, it is true, we still drink in somewhat barbaric fashion. At a certain Delmonico dinner every vinted liquor ever brought to this country was served—a liquid lavishness both needless and criminal. Four wines, born in historic years, would have been perfection. Where is appreciation amid such vinous prodigality? How many of the jaded palates present could have detected a fine Madeira, bought in ante-bellum days?—if any of it still lingers in the cellars of the old families of the South. But, as a rule, no longer having sorrowful poverty to forget, and having duly celebrated prosperity's sudden shock, our men have abandoned excessive and indiscriminate drinking.

How comes it, then, that within the last few years the use of intoxicating liquors has doubled, and that now our annual bill for alcoholic drinks is considerably more than a billion dollars? There are many reasons, but one most interesting is that, while extreme indulgence is rarer among men, it has in

greater proportion grown more customary among women. The minister denouncing the intemperance he imagines has spread through all classes of society, probably knows but little more whereof he speaks than does the indignant and equally inexperienced editor denying the charge; but he happens to be much nearer the facts.

It is only within a decade or so that this could truthfully be stated. I endeavor to recall some fleeting knowledge of the feasts and follies of the ancients, and fail to find women among the bibulous. Imagination instinctively pictures the maiden of classic days as submissively engaged in filling the wine-cup of luxuriously lounging man. It is only the modern woman that, on a festal equality, clinks glasses with him. This is advantageous to both, although, when the glasses have clinked too frequently, the song sometimes dies on his lips, the woman passes from memory, and naught remains but the wine—and in the vintage of the latter he now finds he has been deceived.

Our old friend Lucius Lucullus—what would the essayists do without him?—served his guests with wine costing an equivalent of twenty dollars an ounce; but there is no record of a woman's abuse of this precious liquor. His friends held moderation to be the soul of epicureanism, of which quality there was little in the festival given by George Neville on becoming Archbishop of York, when were consumed two hundred tuns of ale and one hundred and four of wine. But even in that debauch woman had little part; nor has she been among the great his-



torical gluttons. Into her brain could never have come the bestial thought of Brillat-Savarin, who, not satisfied with the grossness of his eating, demanded that he be closely surrounded by mirrors, therein to gloat over his vulgarity multiplied. It is only here in America, and at the commencement of the twentieth century, that we find woman replacing man as the drunkard and the gormand.

The development of this appetite is gradual and almost systematic. It is not so long ago that the debutante members of New York's fashionable "dancing classes," girls of eighteen and nineteen, were content with a buffet service of chicken salad, sandwiches and lemonade. Today they would resent the absence of terrapin and champagne. An additional glass or two of wine is a temptation not easily resisted after a fatiguing waltz; and in some secluded nook it is great fun, in a spirit of bravado, to inhale a puff from one of her partner's dainty rolls of white paper. These, a powerful encouragement to the desire for drink, soon pass beyond a stealthy pleasantry; one is no longer startled at sight of a diamond-monogrammed cigarette-case among the gifts to a bride.

The girl is scarcely more than out, and it is usually previous to that event, when she is introduced to Europe; and even if she is not as reckless as some that have stolen out *en masque*, and without parental knowledge, to watch the revelry of a *bal de l'Opéra* at Paris, her mother does not hesitate to guide her through the feverish atmosphere and garishness of the *salle de jeu* at Monaco. These are of the seemingly remote, but really forceful, causes making familiar and attractive the thought of drink, and they have had their share in arousing the appetite in older, even if equally ignorant and inexperienced, American women. On her return to this country there is the Newport season, which is scarcely synonymous with the Keeley cure; or, perhaps, if of quite another set, the new Saratoga, even more

effective than Mammon's Rhode Island paradise, because of the matter-of-course acceptance and patronage of the roulette table and race-track. The annual Horse Show is next in the social program, and, if making a day of it there, a congenial two are pretty certain to have cocktails, a quart of Chablis or Brauneberger and liqueurs with luncheon; cocktails, a quart of Brut and liqueurs with dinner; and Scotch-and-soda and another bottle of Brut with supper, after the show at night. The chaperon, did you say? I've seen just one in a year, and she appeared scarcely free of swaddling-clothes.

Incidentally, the ordinary events of the girl's life tend in this same direction. When vaudeville is the customary program after a home dinner party, and the performance of an entire opera company an adjunct to a supper, when costly souvenirs are as obligatory upon a hostess as is something to eat, and when a whole forest is uprooted that it may turn the vast dining-room into the semblance of a pine wood, there is evident a condition of things that, by its grotesqueness, immensity or bizarrerie, is conducive to a willingness, if not the actual desire on the part of the girl, to take more wine than will cause merely a heightened wit and color.

At this period of her life she still listens attentively to, but takes almost too literally the meaning of, the minister's, "Although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins, yet ought we chiefly so to do when we assemble and meet together"! Not chiefly, but solely. While the perfume of the incense permeates her being, while the rustling fashionables are bowed about her, she bends brimming eyes above her prayer-book, and resolves henceforth to abstain from cocktails and all that goes with them. "From all inordinate and sinful affections; and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil," comes the monotone from the pulpit. "Good Lord, deliver us," she whispers in response. And that night, at Sherry's,

she for an instant hesitates between martini and manhattan.

Perhaps even before her marriage, certainly shortly thereafter, she has become an expert on three points: First, she knows what are the right wines at the right times—where the Spanish Manzanilla belongs, where the sherry, Madeira and burgundy. Next, she has by heart the destroyers of a telltale breath—lemon peel for cocktails, celery for a mint julep, any fruit for champagne and a slice of pineapple for straight whisky. The pineapple is not needed as yet, but it will be in time. Lastly, she is familiar with the sequence of drinks by which there is least danger of intoxication resulting.

Knowledge such as this indicates is, in a way, harmless. The housewife hostess whose modest menage does not permit a servant whose special care is the wines, but who herself understands their proper handling and serving, is a godsend; she who knows that, above all others, sparkling wines must be kept on their sides, that port should be strained through cambric, that burgundy must be decanted with careful slowness, and sherry at least an hour before using and, of all wines, served warm; she who knows that wine is not of necessity good because it is old, and whose wine-cellar does not adjoin the furnace. Once in a lifetime, too, perhaps you have been welcome in a stately, yet cozy dining-room, remindful of that of a Florentine palazzo, the logs ablaze and their light reflected on the antique sideboard at which stood a woman of witching eyes and smile, herself preparing the cocktails or pousse-café to be taken tête-à-tête, and accompanied by a flash or two of wit, a bit of smothered laughter and a mere hint at making love.

A taste; a sip. Upon her lip  
A happy languor lay.  
Upon her cheek there bloomed a rose  
Like sunrise on translucent snows;  
And, looking in her eyes, you thought  
That into her fair self she'd wrought  
The beauty and bouquet,  
The flying gleams, the half-felt dreams  
Born of that pousse-café.

But such a woman is rare—she of charm and knowledge and the gift of comradeship. Nowadays she prefers a crowd, the eternal orchestra, the restaurant pousse-café and the cocktail of commerce. On New Year's Day, a quarter of a century ago, she and her sisters, arrayed in their newest and most fetching gowns, would have received you with cordial grace and splendid hospitality. There would have been an eggnog, famed throughout the town, and a delectable punch of which they would have taken with you just a tiny, smiling sip. Their doors no longer open on New Year's Day. The men drink instead in the gaudy cafés of the fashionable hotels, or at their clubs they drown the dreariness of the festival, and at night the women join them in the restaurants for the same old round of champagne and eatables.

Restaurant and hotel dining and supping are largely responsible for the increase of drinking among women. We have lost even the traces of all those quaint and harmless home-drinking customs that came to us from England, where, in former times on the stroke of twelve on New Year's Eve, the wassail bowl, descendant of the grace cup of the Greeks, was drunk in turn by each member of the family. When there remained to us even the family dinner, when it was still the custom for women daily to preside at their own home table with the children occasionally present, and only a few close friends, the wines, while of the best, were not abused. At rare intervals restaurants that are now no more were visited, but visited for the express purpose of dining, and the wines still remained an incident. But the glittering splendor, the dazzling lights, the gay frocks and flashing jewels, the mixture of stage and society, of bohemia and the ultra-exclusive, characteristic of our dining places of today—all this in itself intoxicates. Wine in excess seems but natural. Then, too, when the home dinner practically has been abandoned to the housekeeper, the nurse and the

little ones, it is so easy to drift into the habit of, "Dear, I'm really due at Van Blank's tonight. You don't mind dining with the crowd without me?" Soon this becomes quite a matter of course, and then—well, ultimately, she doesn't mind in the least; only, there is no crowd. The advantage of its absence was appreciated by the fair and witty Lady Mary Wortley Montagu:

But when the long hours of the public are  
past,  
And we meet with champagne and chicken  
at last,  
May every fond pleasure that moment en-  
dear,  
Be banished afar both discretion and  
fear!

And in the banishment of discretion rests both the charm and the danger. But whether she enters there for a supper *à deux* or to join a merry, because *ennuyée*, crowd, does she realize that through these corridors, side by side with her, sweep a score of equally beautiful and as richly gowned women who should be, if they are not, known to the house detective? And is she aware that in and out through these groups pass professional gamblers, promoters of "fake" mining schemes, the most vulgar and leering of the pretended "men-about-town," and the cheap clerk who has committed some petty theft that he may come here for a few hours of an evening, and find intoxication in the perfumed passing of these haughty women, imagining himself for the moment, poor fool, of their world?

Unfortunately for her, tonight neither blood nor wealth differentiates her from women in the throng that she would despise did she know them there. For even an expert acquaintance with a proper sequence in drinks has not saved her from evil physical results. Except mentally, and that known only to herself or revealed by an unconscious slip of the tongue, the woman of experience has been able to look out for herself morally—if she has wished. But long-continued drinking shows tonight in slightly blotched

skin, in the somewhat unclear eyes, in a certain but intangible hardness and weakness alternating in her features, in a change from the former liquid voice and a cynical looseness in the sentiments expressed.

There are, of course, women that do not go to this extreme, not even to that permitted by what I have termed the proper sequence. They have too great a love for the alluring lines of their bodies and for the clear beauty of their complexions. But even with these the amount of intoxicants taken in the course of a day is more than they themselves realize. Conditions of social life were never so artificial and unwholesome as they are now, so nerve-racking as slavery or the stock market. In the seemingly trivial round of dressing, shopping, trying on, receiving and paying calls, the woman at one moment finds herself physically exhausted, at another strained to the highest nervous pitch. She is enraged by the very noises of the city. Through the day there may have been here and there a drop of cordial or cognac, but at dinner she has earned her two glasses of champagne. And so, at night, she eagerly welcomes the wine, and feels at once its resulting restfulness and content.

But, unfortunately, champagne, although the wine above all others that, taken in moderation, exhilarates and does not debase, brightens but does not make hilarious, feeds wit but not indiscretion, is, on the other hand, the wine invariably served amid those scenes that most scorn moderation. And while there is less excuse for intoxication from champagne than from any other wine, it frequently results in that condition in women, who crave it throughout all the courses of a dinner, and have lost all appreciation of the delicate bouquet and flavor of far nobler wines.

In reality the woman does not need these stimulants, although, in all honesty, she believes she does. Her actual needs are less excitement and more rest, proper food, fresh air, baths and exercise. She is a nervous wreck, and

the first wrinkles have appeared. Premature age is upon her. The physician of today has a new specialty.

By now, of course, the inevitable love of whisky has come. For the whisky-loving woman is as naturally the outcome of the champagne-drinking debutante as is the *divorcée* that of the jilt. Even whisky, which is as much the drink of sociability as would be a nice sparkling glass of carboic acid, has had, on poetic grounds, its advocates. The late Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll claimed that "it is the mingled souls of wheat and corn," and that "in it you will find the sunshine and shadow that chase each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June, the carol of the lark, the dews of the night, the wealth of summer, and autumn's rich content—all golden with imprisoned light."

A few men may have found these, for a brief space, in whisky. But a woman has never done so, for she has not even the redeeming power of throwing reminiscent sentiment about her drink, of whatever kind it may be. She takes it either because of sociability, because she craves the effect, or because she is still at that stage where it is pleasant to her palate. To the man, on the contrary, there is a certain romance tinging, for instance, his glass of wine, for he knows there are well-guarded secrets in its growth and in the treatment of the grape and juice. Absinthe takes him back to the Boulevard des Italiens in Paris, even though he quaff it on Clark street in Chicago; he sees in it the flowers of hyssop, the caraway of Southern France and anise brought from Andalusia in Spain. He sees in it a number of other things if he sticks to it; but the woman shares that possibility.

For her, however, is no carol of lark, no rich content nor breath of June in association with whisky. In time it brings about the final stage, when she realizes that she is intoxicated and wishes to remain so. Strangely enough, while she has no remembrance of the physical and mental suffering involved

in recovering from this condition, however often she may have undergone it, she will refuse anything that will bring such a recovery about. The moment a glimmering of absolute sobriety reaches her she will resort to any subterfuge to obtain more of the poison that deadens.

The women of the Anglo-Saxon race, and usually its most brilliant and cultured women, are almost alone in knowing the longing for drunkenness for its own sake. Those of France are familiar with the unique intoxication of an hour, perhaps, when at five o'clock each day Paris gathers—or once gathered, for there are sad rumors of a Teutonic invasion—about the tables stretching for nearly three miles along the sidewalks of the inner boulevards, and all the world seems intent upon a brief space of the illusion, inspiration and enthusiasm concealed in the sluggish greenness of the glass of absinthe. Here is some excuse for the drinker: the boulevards gay with smart equipages, with flowers and fine frocks and smiling faces. But the Parisienne, who half the time takes nothing but sugared water, would stand aghast at the American woman's solitary vice of whisky drinking. The use of absinthe, it is true, tends naturally to that of drugs, such as morphine, and the fashionable women of Paris lead the world as morphinomaniacs. But even in this there is nothing of necessity repulsive, it having been truthfully said that there are but three stages in such a career, "poetry, ecstasy and consumption"! The method of the American woman is less picturesque. Even in the midst of efforts at reform, she of the bluest blood has a *nostalgie de la boue* as fierce and as uncontrollable as though she had been born in the slums.

As we grow older, if we have known intimately life's many phases, we are more prone to forgive, more willing to forget, less capable of becoming indignant at outrages, less likely to imagine, or even to resent, an insult. "*La vie est brève!*" we say, with a shrug of the shoulder—



La vie est brève;  
Un peu d'amour,  
Un peu du rêve,  
Et puis—bon jour!

La vie est vaine;  
Un peu d'espoir,  
Un peu de haine,  
Et puis—bon soir!

Therefore it is, perhaps, that I have some sympathy for the woman in the divorce court whose name is coupled with that of but a single co-respondent—a cur, in all likelihood, but one to whom it may be she has given the first and last real love of her life. When her name is associated with a half-dozen I am certain the woman is a drunkard, her moral nature lower than that of the outcast of the streets. That, in a nutshell, tells the result of excessive drinking among women—the loss of self-respect.

There are those who will say, "But all this is true only of the fast circles of the millionaire set." Their example may have been influential, but pray do not imagine that all those you see in the fashionable New York restaurants are of the Fifth avenue crowd and owners of cottages at Newport. Nor are they all theatrical stars and popular "show girls." Many are occupants of conventional fifty-dollar upper West Side flats, furnished on the instalment plan, or of homes not yet paid for in the suburbs.

It is well known that the stage almost invariably proves the temporary and hopeless refuge of the drink-discredited woman of society. She finds, unfortunately, she has but leaped from the frying-pan to the fire. The stage, which in itself has never caused a woman's tarnished name, is also cursed by drink; not, of necessity,

absolute drunkenness, but the excessive drinking that makes poisonous the road tour's obligatory breaking down of conventionalities.

I had intended that all this should be written in a tone of gentle raillery; I had meant to dwell on the poetry of drink, on the joyousness of the traditional trinity of wine, woman and song, on the innocent bond of jollity and camaraderie the cup has established between men and women. But it cannot be treated in that fashion—not, at least, in honesty and by one who knows whereof he writes. No man that has closely touched this phase of woman's life, social and theatrical, no man that has known a hundred instances where, night after night, fame and fortune were seen dancing in the diamonds of the wine, and in the morning were found stretched lifeless in the dregs of the glass, can calmly sit down and write of the poetry of the thing. He can talk it, he can live it and lie it, but he cannot commit the literary hypocrisy of putting it in sturdy type.

I—and you, perhaps?—who drink, to whom the sparkle of wine and the gaiety of honest laughter, the bright eyes of women and the good-fellowship of men have always been dear. who loathe the fanatical and oppose the prohibitive, despite all this know full well that on the stage and in society, in Fifth avenue and in the lowest tenement, woman has no blacker bane. Why? Because it quenches laughter and stabs good-fellowship, stifles ambition and destroys intellect? No, not because of these, but because it is the death of love, without which life is nothing.



## VERY LIKELY

**SUBBUBS**—Why don't you run down our way with your auto?

**CHAFFER**—Guess I'll have to. It's the only thing I haven't run down.



# THE END OF THE STORY

By Emma Wolf

“AND that is all?”  
“All.”  
“The end was not far distant.”

“How can you tell that?”

“By the air of climax pervading everything—everybody. He—the hero—is fast succumbing to the intense strain. To prolong the suspense would be inartistic—detrimental to the reader’s sympathy—the sharp power of the story’s interest.”

“Then you think it——?”

“I think that, unfinished—as it stands—it is remarkable, more for its magnetic style than for the story. I can’t say just what it is, but had she finished it I have no doubt it would have made Miss Locke’s fame and——”

“That’s all she would have asked. Her one ambition was to obtain recognition through a long story, a novel. She realized perfectly the ephemeral nature of the things she wrote for your magazine and the others. But the sustained effort was too much for her frail frame; she broke down under it, as you know.”

“And death ended it.”

“As you see.”

Poynter poked up the glowing log with his toe.

“I fully appreciate the sacredness of your confidence in reading the story to me,” he said quietly, addressing the flames, “and I confess I hesitate over what I am strangely eager to say.”

“I wish you would say it,” urged young Locke curiously.

“I was interested in Winifred Locke, your sister,” began the editor in a musing tone, “more as a person-

ality than as a woman who writes. For before this”—his eyes swept the manuscript upon the table—“she was little more, editorially speaking.”

“I believe all her life is in this,” said her brother bitterly.

“Yes; this seems to have been the beginning of power—and the end.”

He picked up the poker absently, thrusting it into the glowing wood, watching the embers hiss and separate and crackle into flame. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, the iron clattering from his hand to the bricks.

“My God, Locke, what is the end?”

He turned a pale, disordered face upon the boy who looked up at him, stupefied by the abrupt assault.

“The end?” he stammered as if asked to unravel something unthought of.

Poynter turned impatiently from him and strode across the room. At the farther end he faced about, seemingly composed.

“I was thinking of the story,” he explained more calmly, with an effort toward a smile at sight of the young fellow’s consternation. “It interests me more than I can make clear to you.” He came back and seated himself opposite his guest. “Your sister and I had several conversations together,” he went on, in further explanation. “She was very—what the sentimentalists call—sympathetic.”

“Yes?” breathed Locke questioningly.

“It was a comfort to talk to her; she responded as flint to steel.”

“Yes,” supplied Locke, in the pause.

“One day I told her, in outline, the life story of—someone I knew.”

"Yes," repeated the boy absorbedly.

"The main points—the principals of that story are embodied—there."

Again his eyes embraced the manuscript upon the table.

"You mean," faltered Locke, vaguely, "you mean Win—cribbed it—?"

"No, no," the man refuted sharply. "It was creative material to her, and so her own; but——"

"But," Willis Locke cut in, his eyes drawn close in suspicion, "you think that, considering your contribution toward the plot, you ought to have——?"

He stopped short, quelled by the ironic amusement in the other's face. "I beg your pardon," he stammered, with a blush.

"Well—rather," commented Poynter laconically. "Better let me come to the point without any further interruptive inspirations. I was about to say that, because of the peculiar interest I take in the story—and from no mercenary motive whatsoever—I would ask you to let me try to finish it."

"You think you have the clue?" cried Locke eagerly.

"Far from it. But I want you to give me the right to find it."

The boy hesitated over the responsibility, glancing down at the helpless sheets. He was unaccountably moved by Poynter's extreme, yet controlled, earnestness.

"Understand," Poynter continued quietly, "I shall offer no version which does not satisfy me as being just what she had in mind. When it is once completed the entire work shall be hers—yours by inheritance."

"But why—why do you undertake so gratuitous, so disinterested a task?"

"In a manner incomprehensible to you, the work will not be disinterested. If you grant me the favor I shall regard it as a trust—sacred to her memory."

The tears sprang to Willis's eyes. "I thank you," he said unsteadily, "although I don't quite understand. But, somehow, I believe Winifred

would have it so." He passed him the packet.

Poynter took it with reverential hand. "If by the end of four months I have made no headway I shall return it to you," he said. "You say there were no notes pertinent to the story among her effects?"

"None. My sister, Mrs. Chalmers, and myself have searched indefatigably and found no trace of a note of any description. It was a habit of hers never to jot things down—she always maintained it hampered natural sequence."

"And she died in California?"

"Yes—in Pasadena. She had a hemorrhage while traveling there from Santa Barbara. The end came two days later."

"You went to Pasadena?"

"Yes. I brought away—everything."

"Did you question anybody?"

"About her work? No. We didn't know at the time."

"How long did she stay in Santa Barbara?"

"Not longer than a day or two, I should think. She stopped over only to see the Mission."

"And where do you suppose she stopped while there?"

"No doubt at the best hotel. But we did not inquire."

"And it all happened—just when?"

"A year ago next month—June."

"Thank you. I am asking these questions because I think I may take a run out there—go over that ground before setting my wits a wildgoose chase."

"Detective work?" smiled the lad sadly, rising to go.

"Secret service," said Poynter in his usual noncommittal tone, taking his extended hand.

"I will send you any addresses of California friends I find. I don't know what to say; I think I have done right. I thank you—but please, please remember——"

"My dear boy, I am staking a large share of my own peace of mind on this—*dénouement*. And I have promised to return it at the end of four months if I gather no light, you know."

With this proviso established young Locke took his departure.

When Poynter returned to the library he rang the bell for his servant.

"Briggs," he said when that general factotum appeared, "I shall be late to-night. Don't wait up—I'll make the house fast."

"Eleven nights running, sir," murmured the man, straightening the chairs.

"Are you my timekeeper as well as my housekeeper? Tell me, Briggs, how much of his own soul may a man claim for himself?" He spoke genially, adjusting the shade of the drop-light the while.

The man lingered. "It all depends, sir, on his obligations—social or family."

Poynter stared in amazement, but the next instant his face settled into its habitual gravity. "I have no obligations—of any sort," he said bluntly. "Good night."

Briggs threw a fresh log on the flames and left the room.

Poynter sat down before the table. His hand still held Winifred Locke's unfinished story.

"How she grasped it!" he mused. "How it must have grasped her! And she has idealized—everything." A gentleness stole over his face, softening oddly the sternness of the dark young features. And then, "She knew," came the corollary, and a flood of color mounted slowly from his chin to his brow.

A vision of the girl's vivid, sensitive face arose before him in all its eager sympathy while she listened. And yet—the answer. Had she, highly sensitized as she was, the intuitive power which told her in one clairvoyant flash the truth which had eluded him all his life? Had she wished in her sweet young sympathy to complete the message—thus—to him, only to be frustrated by death?

The intensity of his thought enfolded him in an infinite isolation; his surroundings faded from his perceptions; unconsciously his hand had slipped the elastics confining the manuscript; un-

consciously, as if looking into his own soul, he was reading.

The tale, in its changed English setting, baldly told, robbed of its psychic insight into the character and life of the hero from childhood to manhood, shorn of its pensive grace of style, its gripping humanity, is this:

In the depths of a winter night a lady, young, beautiful and richly dressed, rang the front doorbell of a hotel in an obscure seaside resort and asked for accommodations. Unprepared for guests, astounded at the request at that season, the proprietor, a certain Barker, was about to refuse, but his good wife, struck by a nameless nobility and sadness in the appearance of the girl—for she was little more—interposed, and suggested that if the lady could put up with homely fare they might accommodate her for awhile. Of course the rates were lower at that time of year.

The lady instantly drew forth her purse. "Whatever you may ask I can pay," she said. Barker, mollified, pushed the great book toward her and asked her to register.

She drew off her glove, disclosing a delicate white hand marked by a single gold band, a wedding ring—badge of respectability—which drew Mrs. Barker nearer to her. She wrote distinctly and steadily, "Mrs. Geoffrey Hall."

"You're tired," said Mrs. Barker in her motherly way, "and hungry." Then she stopped, for at the kindly voice the lady suddenly put forth her hands blindly, as if in appeal. Mrs. Barker took them in hers.

Before the week was over she had confided to the good woman that in the spring she would become a mother. In the warmth of the tenderness which greeted this announcement she then confessed that the name "Hall" had been assumed, that for cogent reasons her real name was too prominent to disclose. As was evident, she said, she was in trouble; while on a yachting tour with her husband and several guests his—her husband's—

conduct had been so openly scandalous and he had treated her protestations so cruelly that, after a violent quarrel, in a fit of desperation she had left him. No doubt he, continuing his tour, thought she had fled to her parents, who, in turn, believed her with her husband. That was why she received no letters. "I want to frighten him—teach him," said the young wife sternly. "But when my baby is born I'll go back."

The Barkers, father, mother, sons, became her loving slaves. And in the spring her son was born. He was a beautiful boy, like his mother, and as winning. The Barkers fell down in a body and worshiped him. The young mother was delicate, and an experienced nurse was provided. She, too, joined the band of baby-worshippers.

One day, when the child was a month old, Mrs. Hall went to visit the local bank. She never returned.

Toward nightfall the following letter was received:

DEAR, GOOD MRS. BARKER:

Except that my birth is noble, the whole tale was a fabrication. My child is the child of shame. I bought the ring. You love him. Keep him. I have provided abundantly for his care and needs. The monthly interest on a sum deposited in your bank will reach you regularly. When he is of age let him come into the fortune there deposited and deliver to him the inclosed letter. It contains a charge. It contains also all the grief and despair of his

MOTHER.

The Barkers stood entrapped, enraged. The baby cried. They rushed to comfort him.

The boy thrived. When he was old enough to understand they told him that his parents were dead and had left him to their care. He remained with them. He was never of them. It was a peculiarity of his that he never mourned his mother, but even in his sleep he was known to murmur "father." They never knew that while he trotted about the grounds after Will or Harry Barker he played a silent game all by himself—he "made believe" young Barker was his father and called him so in his little heart. He was a lonely child with a

wistful face yet reticent spirit. He was unhappy at school, and a tutor was found. He traveled. He refused to study and discharged the tutor. He said he would have a "man" who would "let him alone."

"I will be your man," said the tutor, Breen, following the example of all who came into intimate contact with him, loving him beyond reason, and hoping to recover his pupil in short time. Geoffrey laughed at the offer, but he could bully the man and he thought it would not last long. It lasted for many years. The "man" often turned nurse, Geoffrey's health giving out; and they finally went home to the Barkers.

When he was twenty-one they gave him his mother's letter. It was a wild plea for forgiveness. She told her name—she was the daughter of a baronet and statesman. She charged him never to divulge it. Without further explanation she also charged him to find his father. When he came to this point Geoffrey laughed, a laugh very much like a sob.

He called Breen to him. "Breen," he said, "I want you to go to Fulham and find out what has become of my mother—Gwendolen, daughter of Sir Christopher Blount."

The man looked at him, stunned.

"Don't stare," cried the youth; "go!"

Breen never asked questions; he went.

He returned two days later with the information that Gwendolen Blount, or, rather, Mrs. Cecil Gordon—at the age of twenty-three she had married Captain Cecil Gordon of the Royal Engineers—was dead. She had died in childbirth eighteen years ago.

"Good!" said her son nonchalantly.

"And the son—or daughter?"

"Died at birth."

"Good!" said Geoffrey again.

"You do not ask for your father," suggested Breen delicately.

"My father? Ah, Breen, that is the question. Who is my father?"

"Why, Captain Gordon——"

"Stuff, man! Don't you under-

stand that that personage appeared on the scene only after the event, or, rather, mishap—myself? However, who can tell? Tomorrow my life-quest begins. I go to seek my father. I shall find him."

"Sir, he may be dead."

"I know he lives." He lifted his proud, delicately beautiful face illumined by the fanatic faith which was to lead them on for many weary years.

Undeterred by apparently insurmountable difficulties, he began his work in the dark, always keeping Gwendolen Blount's name untouched, following obscure clues, romantic possibilities, grotesque improbabilities, leaving no thread untraced, undaunted by failure, impervious to the delights of youth, the demands of ill health, the allurements of rest.

Once only love touched him. He paused long enough to say, "After the task decreed—then you. Wait for me."

So, on. There were three names forever mocking him—Leroy Bellairs, his mother's cousin and the father of the girl he loved; Hugh Dorset, a musician; Fergus Marvin, her brother's chum. He clung to them tenaciously, digging unobserved, unsuspected, into their most secret histories. Two of them he had met; Dorset alone seemed to elude him. And it was this Dorset, with his fame of personal fascination, who finally obsessed him, overshadowing all other suspicions.

"There was no woman could resist him," said the old innkeeper, telling the story of how "the quality," overtaken once by a snowstorm, had honored his humble hostelry overnight. "When once he choosed to set them eyes o' his onto you—eyes, begging your pardon, sir, and face, too, *for all the world like your own*—not even Miss Gwendolen Blount, proud as a duchess though she were, could keep her cheek from going red and white."

This, with all the nameless nothings, clinched decision, and it was in the room of a hotel in a New England university town that the final scene of the written story was enacted.

The following is a transcription of the last pages:

... He veered round from the window as Breen entered, a white, eager light upon his ethereal face.

"Well, Breen?" The question hurtled through the silence, yet was scarcely articulate.

"It was easy—finding him—after all we'd heard."

"Ye-es?" The word shook in hysterical joy, his hands clenched, his slight frame swayed.

"Won't you sit down, sir? You—"

"Breen—quick, for God's sake—where?"

A slight pause.

"Sir, in the cemetery—dead."

Geoffrey faced his informant in deathly silence. Then he threw back his head, seating himself and laughing oddly. "Dead, you say? Then he was not my father?"

"Sir," ventured Breen, "that, in all common sense, can be no proof. Why not rest satisfied with this silent dictum, accepting—" He paused, startled by Geoffrey's slow rising to his feet and facing him in quivering passion.

"Breen, once and forever, end that argument. As I am a living man, I know that I shall yet stand face to face with him. Do you hear? I—but, oh, God! how long? how long?" He sank back into his chair, covering his face with his hands, sobbing heavily. It was the first time he had broken down, and Breen, shocked, laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Mr. Geoffrey, you are undone, ill. Let me call a doctor."

"Doctor!" He raised a lined, tearless face, sneering into the grave concern of his faithful adherent. "Why, man, what for? Can a doctor give me my father? Can a doctor drive this—this madness from my brain? Breen, Breen! Am I mad?"

"Oh, my dear sir, calm yourself. Let it go. Think. Suppose you do find him, to your sorrow—your shame!"

"Sorrow—shame! If he were standing on the gallows, if he were the lowest sot in the mire, if he were an outcast, a leper—yet I would have seen him—have claimed him for my own." His slender frame shook with the intensity of fanaticism as he gripped the arms of his chair.

"Alas," murmured Breen, pale and distracted, "this is beyond reason—it is mania."

"Mania—yes!" His eyes blazed up at him. "Oh, you who have watched me hungering, starving from my youth, you—you—don't you understand that it is the mania of love? Don't you know that it is my blood crying out to belong to someone—to belong to someone!" He crushed his face into the pillow, weeping at last like a child.

It was a moment for privacy. Breen stole from the room, closing the door softly behind him.



Poynter's head fell forward to his arms clasped upon the table; he was unconscious that he, too, was weeping. He wept himself asleep.

Briggs found him there in the gray dawn. He roused him, scolding incessantly.

Poynter sat up, dazed. "Yes, Breen—Briggs, I mean. We'll find him," he murmured, rising sleepily.

"Sir?"

"Oh—guess I'm dreaming. Fell asleep here, didn't I? Yes, I'm going upstairs. And, by the way, Briggs, I shall leave for the West tonight. You can follow in a day or two."

## II

THE evening was calm and beautiful, and, after dining at the hotel, Poynter decided to stroll up to Winston Hill. It would be a pleasure to see the dear old place and have a chat with Mrs. Winston again. The languorous Santa Barbara air, soft as the touch of a rose, made the old Spanish proverbial "*mañana*"—tomorrow—not only intelligible there but pardonable. The sinking sun had touched the distant, undulating mountains to a rosy effulgence, and the town, nestling in its trees and flowers as in an arm curved against the kiss of the amorous blue sea, seemed resting under a spell of enchantment.

Poynter, his head held high, inhaled the fragrant air with rapture. Winston Hill would be all a poet could ask at this hour. He ascended the slow, winding road, let down the bars of the gate, and found himself upon the broad mesa, or plateau, overlooking the sea, which was the ancestral domain, the dwelling-place of his friend, Elbert Winston. He entered the stately pine grove, his feet sinking noiselessly into the thick carpet of needles, his eyes glimpsing the jewel of ocean through the trees. Upon the whitened cliffs the tide beat a diapason, grandly sonorous, bearing in its monotony a sense of wide peace.

When Poynter reluctantly turned to retrace his steps toward the house something in its aspect struck him as un-

familiar, and, walking at a quickened pace, he came up the terraced lawns, noting, with a pang, that all the blinds were down; the house looked deserted. He stood still in disappointment, but a step upon the gravel caused him to turn promptly.

"Why, Con," he exclaimed gladly, going forward in recognition of the old gardener, "it looks as if you were the only living creature on the place."

"That's about it, Mr. Edward," said the old retainer, removing his pipe from his mouth and putting his hand into the extended one of his master's friend. "Glad to see you, though. Going to make a stay? Where's your baggage, sir?"

"Where's the family?"

"Oh, they're in Europe this many a day. Why didn't you telegraph, sir?"

"I haven't come to stay—I'm over at the hotel. When did they leave?"

"Last June—somewheres toward the end of the month."

"Suddenly?"

The man peered curiously up at him in the gathering gloom. "Well, yes," he said slowly. "You might say as it was kind o' sudden."

"All well?"

"Not exactly. Mr. Harold, he was kind o' poorly."

"But where on earth could they find a better place for the boy than this?" questioned Poynter, gazing in admiration about him. "Con," he exclaimed eagerly, "is the house open?"

"Here's the keys, sir." He drew them from his pocket. "Every room aired, and dusted, and freshened every morning against their coming home unexpected."

"Well, come along. I've a mind to go through it all again—the library, and the tapestry-room upstairs, and——"

"Take the keys, Mr. Edward. Begging your pardon, sir, but I've lamed my leg and can't go up the stairs. I sleep in the lodge over yon. But you go on, sir; the electric lights is all in order, and you just make yourself to home."

"All right, I will. Where shall I find you when I come back?"

"Hereabouts. I'll be smoking my pipe."

He ran lightly up the stone steps and entered the picturesque hall with its broad, winding staircase and over-looking gallery. The place breathed home into him in a manner so unexpected, so alluring, that for a moment he paused as if listening. "Seems like an inaudible invitation to stay," he thought whimsically, opening the door of the library.

He found the button, and instantly the great Gothic room was flooded with light. He gazed about him delightedly, recognizing the inviting book-shelves, the organ, the many details reminiscent of pleasant hours.

His eye was finally held by a missal-like volume resting quite alone upon the massive table near him. He approached and idly turned over the stiff yellow parchment leaves. On the instant he was caught, as in a net, by the medieval foreshadowing of the alchemist, the *alkahest* of Paracelsus. He seated himself absently, forgetting time and place in the fascination of a study over which he and Winston had had many a tilt. Only the striking of a clock from some distant room caused him to start, reminding him of the man waiting outside. With a laugh of contrition, and leaving the book open, he went hastily out to find him.

"Con," he called softly through the still evening air, "Con!"

"All right, sir," came the response a few yards away; "I'm coming."

"I'm not going yet, my man," he explained. "There's a book in there that promises to keep me for two or three hours yet. I may fall asleep over it, but—you won't worry? I'll return the keys all right."

"Sure, Mr. Edward. As long as you want. But ain't it kind o' lonesome?"

"Lonesome!—not a whit. I'll find you in the lodge, eh? Well, so long."

He returned to the library and resumed his absorbing reading.

It may have been only an hour, it may have been two, when he suddenly looked up.

"This sort of thing goes to the

brain," he thought, coming back to the electric-lighted present with an effort. He rose to his feet, closing the book lingeringly, yet realizing his fatigue as he turned off the light and left the room.

In the hall he paused irresolutely, looking up at the encircling gallery. "By Jove!" he thought, "I must have another look at that beautiful tapestry-room with its jutting window."

He sprang up the stairs in a few long-legged leaps, turning to the right toward the room of endeared memory.

On the threshold he stood enthralled. The room was flooded in moonlight, and, facing him through the deep circular bay-window, gleamed the infinite sea, touched to glory by the gold of the moon. It was like a phantasm, a dream, and Poynter, compelled by the beauty before him, seated himself absently in the cushioned chair standing between the room proper and the broad, recessed window-place. The lace curtains, drawn aside, hung in folds as of heavy yellow silk, so enriched were they by the mystic glow; the tapestry couch stretching across one-half the window space, bathed in the mellow splendor, seemed awaiting some romantic episode. The fauns and satyrs on the tapestry panels at the side played fantastically in the glooming.

A touch of unaccountable sadness stole over him—or was it only a strange weariness? He closed his eyes. The fauns and satyrs, human, non-human, tiptoeing gaily toward the knowledge and sorrow of man, played on in the moonlight. A heaviness of despair—or was it utter weariness?—weighted him.

A low, deep sigh moaned through the silence. He sat motionless—listening.

Strange! The sound had come from just before him. He could have sworn that, by putting out his hand, there, toward the couch—Ah, heaven! through the moonlight it stole again, breaking now into deep, disconsolate sobbing. He put out a wild, pitying hand. Nay! what was it?—the blurred mumbling—the voice—voices—speech without body—here, about

him, upon him, beating into his being—pinioning him——

Ah! How he arrived there he never knew, but he was out in the night, rushing toward the lodge.

"Yes, sir. I heard you—I'm here! Feel me. It's Con all right, sir."

The man drew him into the lamp-lighted room, holding him with shaking hand while he led him to a chair.

Poynter was laughing foolishly. He put his hand before his shocked, pallid face, while Con proffered him a glass of whisky.

"I fell asleep, Con," he explained when the warmth of the liquor, the light, the human presence near him, had restored his self-control, "and I had a most horrible dream—at least, I think it was a dream." He shuddered through his puzzled smile.

"In the library, Mr. Edward?"

Poynter looked up in surprise at the man's shaken voice. Con's face was hideously a-grin with fright.

"Why, no," returned Poynter slowly. "It was in the tapestry——"

"Ha-ha!"

The mad sound from the man gave Poynter a start. "What does this mean?" he demanded sternly.

"Begging your pardon, sir," whimpered Con, "I couldn't help it, sir. But oh, will you tell what it was you dreamt?"

"I didn't dream it," said Poynter deliberately. "I heard it—heard it with my waking ears as——"

"For God's sake, sir, don't!" The man had caught his sleeve. "I mean, sir—what did you hear?"

"A voice," said Poynter in a low tone, eying the trembling man curiously; "voices—talk without words—and a weeping in the room, just——"

"Yes, sir, I know—I know! You wasn't dreaming, Mr. Edward."

"What do you know?" he questioned sharply.

"Mr. Harold, sir," the man began in a whisper, "he went stark, staring crazy over it, and the next night Miss Lucy Shreve slept there and ran shrieking into Mrs. Winston's room crying, 'Words—words without any faces.'

Them were her words, sir, 'without any faces.'"

"Go on," said Poynter, pitying the man's white-lipped terror, but determined to solve the strange occurrence.

"And then—Mr. Winston and Mrs. sat up there together the next night, not believing a word of it. And the next day, sir, they left for Europe."

"When did this happen?"

"Nigh a year ago now. Mr. Harold was just home for his vacation."

"And who had occupied the room before?"

"The writing lady."

"Who?"

"The writing lady—Miss Winifred Locke, sir."

Poynter, ashamed of his thumping heart, picked up the half empty glass and swallowed the whisky at a gulp. He found it necessary to clear his throat before speaking.

"How long did Miss Locke occupy the room?" he asked.

"Most a week. She was took sick at the hotel and Mrs. Winston knew her and brought her here. She died at Pasadena two days after she left."

"Tell me about her stay here."

"She was a sweet young lady, sir."

"Yes, I know. I knew her."

"She used to lay under the pines and say they was the mothers of the forest because they sang real lullabies; and the flowers—she kind o' loved the flowers. The poinsettias she said was dusky Indian maidens—and——"

"Was she much in the room?"

"At sunset, sir, she laid down on the couch to watch it at sea. She told me so—she kind o' liked to talk to me—I don't know why—and she says to me one morning under the pines, 'I'm at sunset myself, Con, and at sea too—about the end of my story. I'm in sight of land, yet I can't strike it. But I'm hoping to arrive every night,' she says. And every day she says, kind o' sad, 'I haven't arrived yet, Con.' And the morning she left, says I, meaning to make her smile because she looked kind o' white and wan, 'Did you touch land last night, miss?' And Mr. Edward, I wish you could 'a' seen her

face—eager-like, and glad, but soft-like, like daybreak over them mountains, sir, and, 'Oh, Con,' she cries out, 'I did. And tomorrow, please God, I'll be strong enough to write it.' But she never was, poor lady. She had a hemridge on the cars, and that's all we know, sir. But ever since there's been that in the room—*that!*"

Poynter sat leaning forward in a listening attitude, his eyes fastened on the floor, his hands grasping his knees.

Could there be such a thing as disembodied thought? Had emotion, deep as life, agonizing as death—*entity?* Could thought—such intensity of thought as Winifred Locke's—*haunt?* Could—?

He sprang to his feet. "Con," he said hoarsely, clutching the man's arm, "I intend to sleep in the tapestry-room tomorrow night."

But in the clear, laughing light of the next morning he said, "Bosh!"—not to the reality of the sound he had heard, but to the wild rush of conjecture and mystic conclusions which had overwhelmed him the night before.

That he, Edward Poynter, agnostic, positivist, could in his agitation have regarded the phenomenon as a "super"-natural manifestation appeared to him now an absurdity, a momentary mental aberration. No doubt some defect in the building, a flapping shingle, a loosened stone, a breakage, a leak, in conjunction with the muffled roar of ocean, the whispering pines, or whatever adjacent agent, had occasioned the acoustic display. That the Winstons had connected it with the death of its late occupant, running from it as from a ghost-haunted spot, was comprehensible enough. That he, for a space, after hearing the facts, had done likewise he attributed to his tired brain, over-excited by the coincidence of her connection with the sound-haunted room and the object of his visit to the town.

Deliberately keeping all other suggestion in abeyance, deliberately divorcing himself from all thought of Winifred Locke and her unfinished story—yet, with unconscious incon-

sistency, deferring all activity and decision until the vigil of the night should be over—he set about passing the day as pleasantly as might be.

He knew the charming old Spanish resort and its romantic environs by heart, but he ordered a horse and, in the fastnesses of the fragrant cañons, wandering through and about the storied Mission with its time-worn court, its quaint old churchyard mutely eloquent of the days of padre, grandee and alcalde, he managed to pass the morning without dwelling upon the weird experience of the night before. Meeting his friend Hammersley, he lunched with him at the club and spent the rest of the day in his genial society.

Yet at nightfall, when he approached the hotel clerk, it was with a surprised sense of lassitude, as after a day's hard work.

"Not well, Mr. Poynter?" the latter asked solicitously.

"Oh, yes. Why?" he returned, raising his brows.

"A shadow, I suppose, made your face look sort of worn. What were you saying?"

"I am going to sleep up at Winston Hall tonight. I half expect my man Briggs on the nine-thirty train. If he comes, send him up to me, will you?"

He made his way through the long streets pulsing with the beauty and romance of the Southern night. Song of guitar, warble of girl voice floated out into the moonlight from dim verandas; lovers passed, moving like visions in a golden mist. A mandolin beat out a gay fandango in metallic sweetness. The palms lifted praying arms as if in rhapsody. Poynter moved on to Winston Hill.

The house, bathed in the hushed splendor, glowed here, cowered in shadow there, looking seaward, stately and still. Beyond, a tiny light told of the old gardener in the lodge. The great waves beat monotonous refrain upon the cliffs below.

Poynter, like a figure in a dim, painted nocturne, moved up the shadowy steps. He passed in and on, up to the tapestry-room.



He closed the door softly, alone with the moonlight which held the beautiful, spacious room in thrall. Poynter slipped silently into the waiting chair.

How still it was! . . . Hark! The silence.

It engulfed him, this cavernous silence, detaching him from self, from the sense of his own identity, his fast-beating heart, his tensely clenched hands. He leaned back in his chair.

Nay—not he—but sad, unutterably sad Geoffrey Hall, worn with weeping in that last moment of frustration and despair. Poynter could no longer withstand the tide of thought. It was as if, lashed to the rear of consciousness, it had suddenly burst its bounds and rushed forward, beating, possessing him in righteous triumph.

He closed his eyes with a sad smile, waiting as Geoffrey Hall was waiting—Hush!

There was Geoffrey Hall—before him—there, in the moonlight, seated in a deep-cushioned chair, his head thrown back, pale and motionless.

Poynter sat upright, thrusting aside the hallucination with vexation. But even as it faded the low, soft moan crept about him, smiting him breathless. It ended in a blur of sound, a delirious mumbling—and then— Did he *see* the thing—did he hear the low, ethereal intoning?—the End of the Story? . . .

And when Geoffrey turned his face again to the life without twilight was falling like a gray-stoled nun. Spent with emotion, a sense of strange peace was upon him, as though he had passed through a great illness into another, gentler life where passion was not, only renunciation.

The door opened quietly. A footfall sounded behind him.

"Is that you, Breen?" he asked faintly, from very weakness, without turning his head.

"Your servant, sir."

The strange response, the unwonted phraseology, caused him to turn his face to the room.

The man stood a few paces away, his hat held between his hands, his head bowed, in an attitude of humility and supplication.

"Breen," breathed Geoffrey hoarsely, "what is it? What have you done? Ah, heaven, you have lied to me!"

"Forgive me." He neither raised his head nor his low, imploring tone.

"Breen," said Geoffrey, rising slowly, wonderingly, as into a great light, "my father lives. You have found him—seen him. Where?"

"Not—in the cemetery."

"Where? No more hesitation! Where? For mercy's sake, speak!"

"Here."

"You have seen him—my father—Hugh Dorset—alive——?"

"Not—Hugh Dorset, sir."

"Quick, Breen! I cannot bear it. Who?"

"Sir—forgive me. I—am—your father. Your servant, sir."

The man's bowed head did not move; still he held his hat between his hands, as if in supplication. There was no sound in all the quiet room.

Then the man, in the same low, beseeching accents:

"For six months I—John Latimer—was her brother's tutor. We—loved. I was penniless, beneath her. Afterward—after your birth—she wrote me—the letter is here, in my bosom—that I must come to you, that I must watch over you, that I must stand between you and death, that I dared not die before you, that I must be to you both father and mother—yet an alien to your love. I have done my best. Forgive me. Your servant, sir."

The winged moments sped. Silence and gloaming filled the room. Over the bowed head with its silvering hair, over the faithful bent shoulders, over the tender, patient hands, the young master's gaze wandered and rested.

Gently he touched him, gently he raised the bowed form. For the first time he gazed into his father's eyes.

"Hush!" said Edward Poynter as one in a trance. "I will write it for you, dear. . . ."

And then silence—sudden, complete—save for the incessant waves breaking on the cliffs beyond. The moonlight lay sweetly on the room.

Poynter sat upright, motionless, stunned. Fragments of his life seemed to lie about him, glancing with startling meaning up at him, as after a cataclysm. The moonlight lay serenely over all.

A prolonged, sharp rapping on the door startled the silence, brought him to his feet.

"Who is there?" he demanded in a loud, discordant tone.

"It's only me, sir," came the answer; "Briggs."



# LA JOUEUSE DE FLÛTE

Par Jean Madeline

**L**A petite sœur arriva un soir, au crépuscule. Elle parut sur le seuil de la porte, portant une étroite caisse en bois noir qui était tout son bagage. On entendit une voix chantante:

— Je suis la garde-malade envoyée par notre mère.

Elle entra, fine, glissant dans l'ombre de l'antichambre.

— Menez-moi près de mon malade.

Son sourire monta dans la chambre douloureuse. Elle se pencha sur la chaise longue où Philippe était étendu, enveloppé dans des couvertures. Elle mit gentiment sa petite main sur celle du jeune homme.

— Nous vous guérirons, dit-elle.

Oh! le regard que la mère leva vers celle-là qui apportait l'espérance! Et ce soir-là, dans la salle à manger qui ne rassemblait plus autour des mets sans saveur que des visages angoissés et des silences opprimés d'inquiétudes, les figures se détendirent, les verres tintèrent plus clair, l'intimité se rasséréna d'une douceur confiante, et le repas fut presque gai, pour la première fois depuis longtemps. Si bien qu'au dessert, le père déclara:

— Nous allons boire une bouteille de champagne pour fêter votre arrivée, ma sœur.

— Très volontiers.

Elle accepta sans prudence. Les règles de son ordre étaient très tolérantes. Et elle-même n'avait point de raideur ni d'onction monastiques. Sous sa cornette de gros linge et le linceul bleu de sa robe, elle était de la vie en fleur.

Cela durait depuis des mois, cette maladie de Philippe qui, à la suite

d'une pneumonie, restait phthisique à vingt-deux ans. Il était là-haut, dans sa chambre, où sa face amaigrie et ses yeux trop brillants souffraient dans le recueillement des rideaux toujours baissés. L'ombre de cette chambre tombait sur toute la maison où les yeux anxieux n'avaient plus que la lueur d'une veilleuse.

La petite sœur arrivée dans le crépuscule transforma aussitôt l'atmosphère. Il semblait que, par la porte ouverte devant elle, étaient entrés aussi une bouffée d'air pur, un rayon de lumière, une odeur vague de printemps.

Elle allait, venait, préparait les potions, rangeait les linges, remontait l'oreiller, gardant dans ces besognes une grâce voltigeante que rien ne salissait. Philippe contemplait la petite sœur bleue avec ravissement.

— Comment vous appelez-vous?

— Sœur Lucile.

Ce nom fit le jour plus clair dans la chambre.

— Restez là, sœur Lucile, restez auprès de moi. Je me sens mieux de vous avoir à mon côté.

Elle s'asseyait près de son malade, et posait ses mains légères sur les mains moites, sur le front brûlant. Elle le regardait en souriant.

Une douceur inconnue pénétrait le jeune homme, sous l'influence de ce charme. Et ce n'était pas une apparition immatérielle, une impalpable figure de vitrail qui se penchait sur sa souffrance. En mettant ses mains sur les siennes, c'était de la vie qu'elle posait sur lui, de la vie fraîche, qui sentait bon.

Ils restaient ainsi longuement, sans rien dire. Aucun souffle ne troublait

cette limpidité. Mais, un soir, Philippe murmura :

— Vous avez de jolies mains, sœur Lucile, et vous avez de jolis yeux.

Les mains tremblèrent, s'éloignèrent, et, sous les paupières subitement baissées, le regard sembla prendre le voile.

— Monsieur Philippe, si vous me dites encore une chose semblable, je serai obligée de partir.

Il devint très pâle et ferma les yeux.

Elle donna ses soins plus à distance. Mais elle ne pouvait pas éviter les effleurements nécessaires. Et ses mains étaient de celles qui laissent un peu de tendresse partout où elles se posent.

Le lendemain, il l'appela :

— Sœur Lucile !

Elle s'approcha.

— Vous êtes fâchée !

— Chut !... Soyez calme. Prenez votre potion.

Elle la lui tendit. Mais la main était là, au bord de la tasse. Philippe, en se relevant, la frôla d'un baiser.

Sœur Lucile avait repris sous son bras sa petite caisse en bois noir. Elle s'en allait, quittant sans retard la maison où elle venait d'être outragée... Mais la mère l'attendait à la porte, et son regard suppliant lui barrait le chemin.

— Nous ne pouvons plus nous passer de vous ici... Et votre départ le tue-rait.

Pauvre mère ! Elle ne songeait pas à en être jalouse, de cette étrangère qui avait pris toute la place auprès de son enfant. Elle détournait son pur regard de la pente dangereuse de cette intimité. Qu'il vécut, mon Dieu ! Et qu'il y eût du bonheur dans ses yeux.

— De grâce, ne partez pas.

Sœur Lucile posa sa petite caisse en bois noir. Grave, le visage sévère, elle remonta vers la chambre. Son sourire était parti.

Le printemps sonnait aux clochettes des lilas. Les médecins permirent que Philippe sortît sur la terrasse. Installé sur sa chaise longue, entouré de cousins, il tendait ses mains maigres

comme pour la tirer vers lui, pour s'en couvrir...

Le ciel était d'une limpidité profonde. Il y avait seulement de petits nuages blancs et frêles qui flottaient très haut dans l'espace, peut-être la lessive des anges suspendue à des cordes invisibles.

Philippe et sœur Lucile se tenaient là, l'un près de l'autre, enveloppés dans la tiédeur de l'atmosphère et l'haléine des jardins d'avril. Par-dessus le mur de la terrasse, un acacia jetait ses branches. Quand elles secouaient leurs fleurs, la terrasse était pleine de pétales tombés...

Et ce fut un après-midi, dans une heure de douceur lumineuse, que le jeune homme osa l'avouer.

— Sœur Lucile...

La cornette se pencha avec un battement d'ailes.

— Je vous aime.

Les ailes de la cornette battirent brusquement, comme un oiseau blessé.

Les ailes blanches s'étaient enfuies. Rien n'avait pu les retenir. Vite, vite, elles s'étaient envolées dans la rue où descendait le soir. Elles étaient allées s'abattre sur les dalles d'une église.

La parole scandaleuse n'avait pas troublé sœur Lucile dans son cœur ni dans sa chair. Mais elle l'avait atteinte dans sa virginité sacrée. Elle avait violé le refuge où la religieuse s'était mise au-dessus des tentations humaines.

Un prêtre pour se confesser, pour se faire laver de l'outrage... Mais le confessionnal était vide, l'église était déserte. La nuit commençait à tomber.

Et la petite sœur demeurerait toute seule, sans guide, sans appui, dans le bouleversement de sa conscience. Elle ne pouvait pas retourner au couvent avec cette salissure sur elle...

— Marie, éclairez-moi ! Jésus, dirigez-moi, puisque je suis seule en votre présence !

Pendant longtemps, la petite sœur resta là, prosternée, dans l'attente du chuchotement divin qui descendrait sur elle.

Les ailes blanches glissaient de nou-

veau dans la rue. Où allaient-elles dans la nuit obscure? Poussées par une brise mystérieuse, elles revenaient vers la maison qu'elles avaient quittée. Auprès de la porte, elles s'arrêtaient, et s'immobilisaient dans l'ombre.

Sœur Lucile regardait la façade. Des lumières paraissaient derrière les fenêtres, non la clarté des lampes calmes, mais des lueurs inquiètes et agitées. Il y avait un mauvais coup de vent dans l'intérieur de cette demeure. La porte s'ouvrit, un homme sortit. Sœur Lucile reconnut le médecin.

— Est-il plus mal? demanda-t-elle en s'élançant vers lui.

— Ah! c'est vous, ma sœur. Le pauvre garçon est perdu. Une émotion violente a dû briser le fragile ressort. Il a peut-être quinze jours à vivre... Il n'y a plus qu'à adoucir sa fin.

Droite, grave, résolue, sœur Lucile repassa le seuil où elle était arrivée un soir, au crépuscule. Elle remonta l'escalier vers celui qui allait mourir. Et toute sa grâce odorante fit de nouveau éclosion dans la chambre, où son sourire revenu se pencha sur Philippe.

— Vous! dit-il, quand ils furent seuls. Vous êtes revenue, ma sœur. Vous me pardonnez donc?

Elle inclina vers cette souffrance son visage charmant, et doucement, chaste-ment, mit un baiser sur les paupières du jeune homme.

— Oh! sœur Lucile... sœur Lucile... m'aimeriez-vous aussi?

— Je vous aime, dit-elle.

Le charitable mensonge fleurit dans la chambre de souffrance. Il balançait autour du lit ses rameaux parfumés. Il s'effeuillait en pures caresses.

Par la fenêtre ouverte entraient la fête du printemps. Mais ce n'était pas de là que venait la lumière. Elle venait de celle qui, en laissant éclater sa féminité, en répandant la séduc-

tion qu'elle avait cachée sous le voile, apparaissait une adorable créature d'amour.

Sœur Lucile n'écartait plus les paroles ardentes. Elle les accueillait près du cloître où s'était enfermé son cœur comme des pauvres auxquels on ne refuse pas l'aumône.

— Donnez-moi vos mains, sœur Lucile. Donnez-moi vos yeux. Votre regard me ressuscite.

Elle donnait ses mains et son sourire. Elle donnait sa grâce et son parfum. Elle donnait sa loyauté et sa pudeur. Elle donnait peut-être son salut éternel.

Car elle était la fiancée du Christ, et ne devait recevoir le murmure amoureux d'aucun homme. Mais ce n'était pas à l'homme qu'elle faisait son don, c'était à sa souffrance. Et partout où il y a de la souffrance, n'y a-t-il pas un peu de Jésus?

Sa pitié devait-elle donc s'arrêter aux plaies du corps et au versement des tisanes? Et en entourant le moribond des flûtes de douceur et de tendresse qui charmeraient sa fin, trahissait-elle son serment et le rôle auquel elle s'était vouée? Ne remplissait-elle pas, au contraire, une mission de pitié supérieure, de charité plus haute, de plus noble et plus généreux sacrifice? Et si elle péchait contre les règles monastiques et scandalisait la morale humaine, ne restait-elle pas aussi la servante attentive et la fiancée fidèle de son divin Ami?

Et l'enchantement continua. Le mensonge de sœur Lucile enveloppa le pauvre garçon jusqu'à l'heure suprême où l'agonisant demanda:

— Sœur Lucile, donnez-moi vos lèvres.

Elle se pencha sur lui. Elle les lui donna. C'est ainsi qu'il mourut, avec un baiser sur la bouche.

Alors seulement la petite sœur alla se confesser au prêtre.



MONEY may "make the mare go," but at the race-track it is often the mare that makes the money go.

## MY NOMAD SOUL

LIKE vagrant breeze that wanders gently by  
 And on above the uplands heavenward,  
 My soul goes forth and mounts unto the sky,  
 Singing a song of rapture all unheard.

Upon the crest of mighty ocean spray  
 My soul, like wind, is strong and brave and free;  
 Great giant of the dark and unknown way  
 That crosses the stern beauty of the sea.

Within the storm my soul and wind are one,  
 And sport in tumult with a stricken world,  
 Each conscious that the other was begun  
 Before the earth was from the heavens hurled.

A hidden whisper is the wind, my soul,  
 Or striving giant of fantastic glee;  
 Gentle as strength when under wise control,  
 But as the primal passions, quick in me.

Yet strength and tenderness their refuge find  
 Within my lover's arms, where, sheltered deep—  
 Oh, loving arms!—like gentle wandering wind  
 My nomad soul lies down to happy sleep.

ISABEL MOORE.



## PARADOXICAL

“HE is an agnostic, isn't he?”  
 “Without a doubt.”



MISS GADABOUT—My doctor compelled me to stay in the house for the past four weeks, so please tell me all the news.  
 MISS TOBASCO—Really, I have heard no gossip for a month.

# ON IDENTIFYING CHARACTERS

By Erastus Worthington

I HAVE a confession to make. I am a writer and I go to nature for my characters. I have repeatedly been asked, "Was Araminta in 'How I Paid for a Baby Carriage' your wife?" or, "Is Euphemia in 'The Trials of a Married Man' your better half?"

Why, of course. I never admitted it before, but now I do.

My stories are a stage, and wifey, in her time, plays many parts. She doesn't like it very much, but I say to her, "Marcia"—her name isn't Marcia; it's a different one in each story and altogether different in real life—"Marcia, this thing means bread and butter to both of us. I don't know anyone else half so well as I do you, and so if you'll please be the plain-looking, absent-minded, timid, incapable wife in today's story, tomorrow I'll make you handsome and self-assertive and dominating."

And Marcia says, "But I'm not any of those seven."

"Never mind, dear," say I; "if I made up a character out of whole cloth and never thought of anyone at all, it wouldn't have any life. It would lack modeling; it would be putty-faced and altogether invertebrate."

So I make her selfish—although she's self-sacrificing; and dumpy—although she isn't; and handsome today and homely tomorrow and pretty the next, although she may invert the order in her own person; and the consequence is that when she goes to a tea people say, "Now tell me, are you Minerva, or Arabella, or any one of half a score of characters?"

And then Marcia shows she is a woman of feeling by answering with

a good deal of heat, and if I am near her I treasure up the glance and perhaps use it with good effect in my portrayal of an adventuress.

And the clothes I dress her in in one story would give delight to her heart, while she would put those I use in the next in the poor box. I don't go in much for clothes, not being a man-milliner, and the technicalities of feminine sartoriality elude me; but I do manage once in awhile to indicate that my heroine is clad in the gladdest rags, and whereas it would take a dressmaker several days and take from me many dollars so to clothe Marcia, in a story it is but a few squirls of my pen and the woman is habilimented.

Some people in far-away States, readers of this periodical, think that my wife must be very expensively gowned solely because I generally write in the first person and often tell domestic tales. On the other hand, there are those who imagine that I am a sort of backwoodsman and that Marcia dresses in homespun, solely from that inveterate habit people have of reading an author's own life into his work.

Why, by the same token, I have risen from the humblest beginnings; I have descended from the proudest circles; I have taken up literature because I couldn't do anything else, and I have made my way slowly and laboriously, as Stevenson did, playing "the sedulous ape" to my betters in letters.

For, if Marcia is identified as the wife, I am even more identified with my hero's parts. Not that they are ever heroic—worse luck. My pen does not lend itself to heroics and I write



more naturally about simple-minded men, and as I happen to look the part myself I am always asked at receptions and the like, "Were you that man in 'The Dopey Gentleman' who acted so like an—who was so—er——?"

"Yes," I always answer, "I was that man, and I was also the murderer in 'The Day the Cook Died,' and I was the supersensitive clergyman in 'The Bishop's Enemy,' and the crazy elevator-man in 'A Drop Too Much,' and the timid bachelor in 'A Night in a Day Nursery,' and the henpecked husband in 'The Rod of Iron,' and the loquacious barber in 'A Close Shave.'"

Why, it's as easy as lying. Accentuate or diminish your own characteristics and you have a host of characters without going out of the house. Every man is a potential murderer at one time or another. You don't have to look up a villain in order to draw from nature. Dip from your own well, mix in a little of your own goodness and pick out one of your neighbors for the outward characteristics, and the rest is easy.

But that matter of neighbors is a risky one. When one lives in a small suburban town it does not do at all to give faithful portraits of one's neighbors, so I take the generosity of Mr. Pitkin, and the dishonesty of that old scalawag Judson, and the benevolent appearance of dear Joe Appleton, and, by mixing them well together, I make Baxter the hypocrite—always putting in a little of what I know of myself for verisimilitude. And not a soul in town knows where I got my ingredients. But once in awhile I hit on a chance resemblance, and then I hear from it.

Perhaps I meet a man on the train and he says, "Say, that was all right, that story of yours in *Carper's*."

I don't write for *Carper's*, but it is a curious fact that no one ever remembers where he read a story. Your neighbor goes on and in a minute you find out that he is talking of "The Man in the Overalls" that came out in the *Censurer*. Then he adds, with

a sly wink: "I recognized Bingley all right."

As a matter of fact, Bingley was not in my mind at all when I wrote, but I see in a second that I have accidentally hit him off. However, it would never do to let my neighbor think that I meant Bingley, because if a man is going to be free with his friends in a book he'd better live on the other side of the continent from where his neighbors reside. (My ancestors were Irish.) So I tell him that it is purely an accidental resemblance, but he only winks the harder and says, "Of course," and makes me wish that I had had Bingley in mind, that I might have made it a little truer to life. One might as well have the game as the name.

It is a fact that I always use my own house as the model for all houses that do not need to be specially constructed for the purpose of the story, and I also use the neighborhood roads the better to run my vehicles and make my characters walk, but I generally add some false identification for the purpose of throwing readers off the track. Not long since I wrote a story and laid the scene in the village where I live—not a hundred miles from Long Island Sound—and the better to make it seem real I said it was the tenth house from the station—mine is the fifteenth. I also called the hero George and the heroine Almira.

When that story came out it made considerable talk, as there was a good deal of action in it and the scapegoat in it was thought, as usual, to be myself. A week or so after its appearance I went to a card party in the village and met Barton, who was one of the first men to be neighborly after I located in Pleasanton. Barton seemed distant. In a few minutes I encountered his wife. She was even more remote. I did not understand it, and, as I like to be on friendly terms with my fellow-townsmen, I went to Joe Appleton and asked him whether he knew of any possible cause for the marked hauteur of the Bartons.

"Well, I don't think George altogether liked your using him for that

drunken imbecile in your 'From Pillar to Lamp Post' that came out in *Scrib-ler's*."

"You mean the *Saturday Past*," I corrected.

"Oh, was it there? Anyhow, he didn't like your naming the feeble little wife Almira or saying that the house was the tenth one from the station. Made it a little too marked."

My mind worked like lightning and I counted houses, and it was even as my friend had said. I had inadvertently given my characters the Barton Christian names and had placed them in Barton's house; and although I spent a good ten minutes trying to explain matters to "George" and "Almira" I was not markedly successful; and now, if I ever use any house in this village again I'll make it the seventieth from the station, and as there are only sixty-nine, I can't make a mistake again.

I've had to give up using sewing societies in my stories; and postmistresses, doctors and clergymen have to be delineated in the most general terms, as the local physician is too handy and too capable to run the risk of offending him, and I'm sure I don't know what I'd do if the postmistress refused to give me my mail, as a large part of my income arrives in the bags.

But I have one advantage over authors who live all the year round in one place. In the summers I go up to Massachusetts, and there have been occasions when I have boldly used my opposite neighbor and given him a Berkshire environment, and the "shore" people did not recognize him, while my good farmer friends are completely metamorphosed by placing them in suburban homes and slicking them up just a little. For human nature is apt to be just as natural in the real country as it is in the suburbs, and I believe it is Carlyle who holds that the main difference between one man and another is the clothes they wear.

In conclusion, I would like to tell a little anecdote of which I am either the hero or the villain, according to one's point of view.

One evening pretty Miss Carleton said to me, "I hate to be in the same room with you, as I'm sure you're studying me for your next story."

With admirable presence of mind I said to her:

"What is one to do if he wants a pretty woman for a heroine?"

And then the next story of mine that came out had for its heroine an irredeemably homely young woman.

And now Miss Carleton won't speak to me.



## SUGGESTIONS

SCENT of the wild, wet marshes,  
And lisp of the lazy sea,  
And a moldering wreck 'mid the coarse green reeds  
Looming dismally.

Scent of the dank, dark marshes,  
And boom of the lonely sea,  
And a screaming seagull sweeping by  
Like a startled memory.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK.

## A GRIDIRON DUET

By Aloysius Coll

GIRL IN THE GRANDSTAND

*She*—3 P.M.

THERE he comes!—my hero,  
Looking now my way;  
Yes, he sees me waving—  
Now he'll win the day!

*She*—3.30 P.M.

Now they're off!—He's waving  
To me! See him wave?  
Who could be so thoughtful,  
Brawny, big and brave?

*She*—3.45 P.M.

Goodness! What a tackle!  
Poor boy! What a thud!  
Wonder if he sees me,  
Blinded in the mud!

*She*—4 P.M.

Oh, they'll surely kill him!  
No, he sees me now,  
Crawling out—but look! there's  
Blood upon his brow!

*She*—4.05 P.M.

Goal!—they've put my hero  
In the ambulance!  
I must go and see him—  
If I get a chance!

*He*—At the hospital—8 P.M.

Mighty glad to see you;  
Didn't know you came  
Into town this morning—  
Were you at the game?

CAPTAIN ON THE FIELD

*He*—3 P.M.

What a mob of people!  
Packed from fence to goal;  
Here's a chance to get our  
Team "out of the hole"!

*He*—3.30 P.M.

Hi, there, you policeman,  
Get the people back! . . .  
Ready!—X, M, T and W—  
Fine one! Fine one, Jack!

*He*—3.45 P.M.

Anyone a kerchief?  
Swab my peepers, Speis—  
Can't go down the line with  
Town lots in my eyes!

*He*—4 P.M.

"Down!" "Down!"—get your bloody  
Foot out of my face! . . .  
Oh, not much the matter—  
Ankle out of place!

*He*—4.05 P.M.

Thank you, fellows! Thank you!  
Yes, a little sore—  
What's the dif?—we got 'em  
Beaten 6 to 4!

*She*—At the hospital—8.01 P.M.

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A MAN will admit to a woman that he can't live without her weeks and weeks  
before he'll admit it to himself.

# OIL UPON THE WATERS

By Morgan Robertson

“THE instrument is getting drunk,” said the executive officer, as he joined the group on the after superstructure deck. “Trouble is coming from somewhere.”

“Mr. Clarkson, I protest,” said the chaplain warmly. “In my capacity of Gospel interpreter I protest against calling Finnegan an instrument of Providence. Why do you permit him to drink?”

“Captain’s orders,” said the officer.

“So that he may become an instrument of Providence, Mr. Parmlee,” added the surgeon, slapping the chaplain good-humoredly on the back. “Think of the many times he has saved this ship and all hands by doing something when drunk that he couldn’t do if sober.”

“Of course, you are right. Providence seems to choose Finnegan in some mysterious manner to— But it is bewildering. I cannot understand it. How does he know what to do?”

“You forget the subjective state,” said the surgeon, “into which Finnegan is thrown when drunk. You forget the clairvoyant knowledge possessed by the subliminal self—that you call the immortal soul.”

“Speak English,” said the chief engineer. “Where did Finnegan get a soul?”

“Go down to your engines,” answered Dr. Bryce severely. “Even they have souls—even engineers have souls, though they don’t know it.”

“But seriously, doctor,” said the engineer, “I thought clairvoyance was all humbug. What is this subliminal self?”

“The primordial brain, inherent through all organic change—of which

instincts are but manifestations—that cares for drunken men and fools, that brings back the cat and the carrier pigeon, that has knowledge of all things, thoughts or conditions in heaven or earth of interest to that brain’s owner.”

“Does it prophesy?” asked the chaplain. “Hasn’t Finnegan displayed prophetic insight?”

“Not at all—only clairvoyant knowledge of existing conditions that threaten trouble. The dumb pressure of this inward knowledge makes him uneasy, and he drinks, befuddles his objective mind, and gets in closer touch with this knowledge—in the subjective or hypnotoid state. The subliminal self is dumb—it can only impart its knowledge by affirmation.”

“How? Explain this,” said the puzzled engineer.

“By affirmation. When the objective mind, or brain, speculates or guesses rightly—that is, when the stream of consciousness happens to touch upon anything in connection with the hidden fact known only to the subliminal self, there will be an uprush of feeling that affirms, confirms, clinches—and we act, or merely know. When this knowledge is of facts or conditions we call it intuition, when of a thought in the mind of another we call it telepathy.”

“Whew!” said the engineer, waving both hands and shaking his head. “It’s too much for me.” He departed in mock haste.

“Mr. Clarkson,” said the surgeon to the first lieutenant, “if Finnegan is drinking, he is subject to an inward pressure. What trouble threatens this ship or her people?”

"None, that I know of," answered the executive slowly, looking around on the calm sea and blue sky. "All hands are well, this ship is invulnerable to anything but Whitehead torpedoes, and we can sink any craft carrying them before she can get near us. The forward thirteen-inch gun-mount is out of order, but we'll find the difficulty when we're out far enough. The barometer is falling, but I don't anticipate a gale, and it needs a typhoon and a cross sea to disturb this ship. No, I see no trouble—though Finnegan may. Here he is, now." They peered down over the break of the superstructure at a gray-haired, emaciated old man, with a vacant smile on his face, being pursued around the after-turret by the master-at-arms.

"Out o' this, Finnegan," said the ship's chief of police as he caught him. Then he pushed him gently forward.

"Jes' wanted to tell the cap'n 'bout it," mumbled Finnegan. "Battleships are bad gun-platforms—he wants ter know it."

The first lieutenant and surgeon exchanged glances.

"What's on his mind?" asked the former. "Battleships are the best gun-platforms afloat."

"Don't know," returned the surgeon thoughtfully. "Better watch him."

"I won't have time," said the lieutenant. "You watch him. I have troubles of my own."

"All right—I will. Don't lock him up."

The group separated, and Mr. Clarkson went to the forward thirteen-inch turret, where a damaged gun-mount demanded attention; and, this attended to, his mind was taken up with the target practice of all the gun crews for the next three hours. At the end of that time two distinct and apparently irrelevant facts were brought to his busy mind—one, by messenger from the officer of the deck, that the barometer was below 29, the other that Finnegan was still drunk, but no drunker. The latter fact was attested by the appearance of the old man himself in the turret, where the executive officer

and the gun crews were perspiring over the work. Both guns had been loaded with solid shot, and were to be fired at extreme elevation.

"Good gunsh," remarked Finnegan, as the men took positions for firing. "Good gunsh—shoot a long way—but can't hit torpedo boats."

"Yes," answered Mr. Clarkson, eying him severely. "Good guns—shoot ten miles—over the horizon. Get out of here."

The harmless and useless old fellow was hustled out and into the arms of the listening surgeon, who led him away. Then the port gun was fired, and a huge pointed cylinder of solid steel weighing over a half ton went up into the air, while the great gun sagged back on its oil cushion.

But there were other sounds in the turret than the roar of the gun; there were the crackling of breaking steel, the swishing of hot oil and the exclamations of startled men. No one was injured; but investigation disclosed that the turret flooring had given way, that the elevating gear of both guns was damaged beyond immediate repair, and that the hydraulic rammers were disabled. The charge in the other gun could not be extracted, and the condition of the gun-mount made it unwise to discharge the gun. The whole forward thirteen-inch turret was out of commission, and could not be repaired away from a dockyard; so, with one gun empty, the other loaded, and both pointing upward at an angle of fifteen degrees, they swung the turret amidships and left it.

"Sticking up like a couple of sore thumbs," grunted Mr. Clarkson, as he joined the surgeon and looked back at the guns. "What has the oracle to say about this?"

"You mean Finnegan?" answered the surgeon. "I've just left him. His rather muddled comment was to the effect that such heavy weights at an elevation made battleships rather top-heavy and that bad weather was coming."

"Well, dammit," said the officer in amazement, "he's right; but what's



taken hold of him? What means this technical erudition?"

"Don't know. I've put him to sleep in the sick-bay, and he's safe—or, rather, we're safe for awhile—from prophecy."

Not altogether; Finnegan's prediction of bad weather was ratified by the still falling barometer, and before midnight the big ship was pounding into a head sea that compelled her, massive as she was, to slow down. Even at half speed the *Argyll* went through the seas oftener than over them. Green hills of water rose over the bow, plunged aft and shattered against the forward turret and superstructure, to rise as high as the bridge in an almost solid mass of foam. Battleships, heavy with armor and guns, are notoriously poor sea boats, and the *Argyll* was no better than her class; she made bad weather of it. And, as though this straight-on, regular head sea were not severe enough to the big, unwieldy and very bad sea boat, the furious wind that came out of the dark like a solid mass—pressing insistently—hauled just before daylight, and blew from a direction at right angles to the first. Then arose a cross sea—a combination of forces against which the best helmsmen often are helpless, and with her steering engine straining like an overworked giant the *Argyll* plunged and rolled, and lifted and sank, until, as day broke over the troubled ocean, Mr. Clarkson was forced to admit that another of Finnegan's comments was based upon truth; the elevated gun muzzles made her a little more top-heavy.

But typhoons are short-lived. By ten o'clock a rising barometer brought comfort to the distracted ship's company, and the wind hauled further and moderated. But there was little abatement of the bewildering cross sea, and there was an almost continuous succession of rain squalls bombarding the ship that kept fully a third of the horizon hidden at all times. Yet, in spite of the general discomfort, it being Sunday morning, Mr. Parmlee held services on the berth-deck.

Tired and sleepy as they were, the half thousand men, gripping the benches to keep their seats, were impressed by the chaplain's sincere words. They listened intently, joined in the hymn played by the band, and bowed their heads in prayer as the earnest young chaplain gave thanks to the God of storms for their reprieve from death. But as his voice dropped its cadence in the final amen every man there sprang to his feet, for preceding the amen by a tenth of a second there rang through the ship a thundering report and a crash that came of nothing less than the discharge of a thirteen-inch gun.

Church "let out." Away they went, an undisciplined mob, and surrounded Finnegan descending from the big forward turret, with a startled, dumfounded expression on his face and blood streaming from a wound in it inflicted by some flying fragment of the further wrecked turret-gear. The big starboard gun had been fired, and, though it now pointed higher than before, its centre of gravity was unquestionably lower; for it had broken down through the weakened flooring and hung in the wreckage, a menace to everything beneath it. They began slinging both guns in chains, and bracing them with shores—a long, hard job—while Finnegan, shocked into sobriety, but nerveless and uncertain of movement, was haled into the presence of the captain and his officers. Dr. Bryce, at his own request, was permitted to do the questioning.

"Why did you fire the gun, Finnegan?" he asked kindly.

"Fore Gawd, sir," whimpered the old fellow, "I dunno—I felt like it—and—I dunno. I felt I oughter—that is, 'fore I did it—then I felt like a fool."

"Why did you feel that you ought to fire it? What did you think was wrong?"

"I felt—all night—yes, sir—all night I kinder dreamed o' firin' it—gettin' rid o' the weight. 'Twas on my mind when I turned out, and I jes' couldn't help it, sir."

"Had you taken a drink this morn-

ing? Speak truly—you know you are permitted to drink."

"I took three nips, sir—one 'fore breakfast."

"Then you were in normal condition. Finnegan, yesterday you said something about battleships being bad gun-platforms. What did you mean? Had your firing the gun any connection with that idea?"

Finnegan looked bewildered, but did not answer.

"You said, too," went on the surgeon, "that the big guns could shoot a long way, but could not hit torpedo boats. Do you remember what put the idea into your head?"

The old fellow looked helplessly around.

"Forgotten, I suppose," continued the surgeon. "Well, all right. Then we are to take, as your reason for firing the gun, that you considered the weight of the shot and powder a danger?"

"Yes, sir," answered Finnegan, his face clearing. "She was loggy in the seaway—she was top-heavy. I couldn't get it off my mind, sir—honest, I jes' couldn't stop thinkin'."

"Very well—that is all," said the surgeon. "Mr. Clarkson"—he turned to the executive officer—"has he improved the stability of the ship? Has he done any real good?"

"No," answered the lieutenant, eying the cringing old man severely. "He has lessened the moment of inertia but a trifle and the danger was past."

"Then it was an auto-suggestion, delivered to his subliminal self when the danger was real—and it persisted. He spoke last evening of bad gun-platforms, which is a thought connected with top-heaviness; and of guns shooting far, but being unable to hit torpedo boats—equally connected. Auto-suggestion and association of ideas, gentlemen, that is all."

"All!" said the irreverent chief engineer. "Isn't that enough? I thought he was only drunk."

"Not at all—simply the victim of persistent subliminal promptings, first delivered as an auto-suggestion to the subconscious mind by its objective

fellow, and finding ready and reactive relief through a train of associated——"

"Oh, Lord, sir!" broke in the victim piteously. "I didn't do all that, sir. I only took three drinks."

But because the victim of auto-suggestion, subliminal promptings and association of ideas had disturbed church and the doubtful peace of the ship's company on that stormy Sabbath morning, he was consigned to the brig—where he went to sleep; and Dr. Bryce, having solved the problem to his satisfaction, sought his room to incorporate the result in a thesis he was preparing on the subject. But sleep and thesis were both impinged upon by a huge antithetical fact forgotten by Finnegan and unconsidered by the doctor. Finnegan awakened with a groan of disgust and the doctor arose with a sigh, for there sounded through the ship the bugle call to quarters, followed by the continuous rattle of all small and secondary guns. Going to the bridge, Dr. Bryce found those of his brother officers not at stations inspecting through the rain squalls a line of long, low, four-funneled craft about a mile ahead, the most sinister and evil-appearing of all seagoing war craft, torpedo-boat destroyers.

"Great guns!" exclaimed Mr. Clarkson, as the surgeon reached his side. "Is it possible that Finnegan had clairvoyant knowledge that they were there and tried to hit them? He said that the big guns would shoot a long way."

"But he also said," answered the doctor, with doubt and speculation in his face, "that torpedo boats couldn't be hit. One thought, as a subliminal inspiration, would annul the other."

"Yet everything he's said or done has relevancy except one: Why did he fire that big gun?"

"Because he was drunk," growled the listening engineer. "You fellows will get the fantods if you don't look out. They're catching. I shall avoid you."

"Do so," answered the surgeon loftily. "You are only an engineer. God made you, it is true—and He made Finnegan."

Laughing as he went, the engineer

left the bridge for the engine-room, where he was needed; and for similar reasons Mr. Clarkson left further immediate consideration of Finnegan to the surgeon, and devoted himself to the problem in hand, which promised to be serious. The sea was still heavy, running in two directions; and not only the big battleship, but the smaller, lighter and faster craft ahead were tossed and tumbled about in a manner to make accurate gun-fire impossible. But herein lay the difference and the problem in hand. While the *Argyll* had nothing but gun-fire with which to withstand those swift and elusive enemies, and was left helpless by its elimination, they, on the contrary, weakly endowed in this form of aggressiveness, dominated the situation by possession of a weapon of war unaffected by the non-stability of gun-platforms—deadly mechanical fish that, undisturbed by wave motion or deflecting obstacle, maintain the original direction given them by the tubes from which they are propelled; that seek a twenty-foot depth and keep it while they travel at a thirty-knot rate; that carry in their heads a charge of guncotton, explodable on impact, that can tear out the side of the strongest battleship afloat—Whitehead torpedoes.

There were four destroyers in sight through the smother, each a magnified torpedo boat, able to take to the sea, but carrying the usual pair of tubes and store of torpedoes. And there was strong evidence that they meant to use them. There were signals displayed from the small yards, crossed up forward, and the two rear boats circled around, taking up positions on the bow and quarter of the *Argyll*, while the two ahead shot across her path to reach similar positions on the other side. It was to be a simultaneous rush of boats from four directions, and perhaps from five, for farther ahead, only occasionally taking form through the driving rain and spume, seemed to be another long, low craft. Perhaps there were even others, farther along and out of sight—called by the voice of the thirteen-inch gun.

The *Argyll* barked and spat with her small and secondary guns, but not an enemy was hit. Not a gun could be aimed in that furious turmoil of tossing water, which hove the ship down broadside to forty-five degrees and pitched her fore and aft to twenty. Ballistic formulas were worthless; gunners could only load, and fire, at an approximate moment of swing. And soon firing was stopped because it was a sheer waste of ammunition. The officers uneasily paced the bridge.

"Battleships are bad gun-platforms," said Mr. Clarkson significantly to the surgeon, as for a moment their eyes met in passing.

"And big guns can't hit torpedo boats," answered the surgeon when they passed again. "And they really do make us top-heavy."

"But big guns shoot a long way," returned the executive, next time they passed. "What the devil did he mean?"

"Don't know. Wait—it'll work out. He meant something."

"Here they come!" called the captain suddenly. "Resume firing—every gun that will bear."

The mist in the air had thickened, blotting out the fifth craft ahead, and all but obliterating the four others which, it was dimly seen, had turned end-on to the *Argyll* and were coming each from its quarter-point in the circle of which the big tumbling ship was the centre. A menacing sight they appeared to these trained officers, versed in the possibilities of torpedo warfare; each a geometrical figure between two high white waves, that enlarged to the vision as does an approaching express train. And it was at express train speed that they came; a very few minutes would decide the fate of the *Argyll* and her seven hundred souls. If, in that heaving sea, but one shot as large as a twenty-pounder should hit a vital part of a boat, that boat would stop. But the storm of shot and shell flew wild; it hit the water at half distance; it flew in air and raised a cloud beyond the targets; it disappeared in the distant smudge; and the rushing destroyers

came on, to half the distance, to a third; in a moment they would be within easy torpedo range, and the captain approached a voice tube, calling, "All hands!" and muttering the conclusion of his thought.

But before that moment arrived a shout went up from a casemate. One boat had been hit; for a cloud of steam arose, and she swung out of her course. Then more shouts were heard; two others stopped, one the centre of a radiating effulgence of red, which changed to thick, yellow smoke, and hid her few fragments from view; the other emitting steam like the first. The fourth wheeled about and fled, followed by shot and shell which went remarkably true compared with the inaccuracy of the preceding fire. The dazed and astonished officers on the bridge, and the exulting crews at the gun positions, did not, until the last of the quartet had settled beneath the surface from the deadly accuracy of the fire which ensued, realize that the sea had calmed—that, though the big ship still lifted and fell from the action of the ground-swell, there were no disturbing waves, no cross seas—no aim-destroying heave. The troubled ocean had become like plastic glass, though the wind still held its hurricane force and the air was filled with horizontal rain and spindrift.

There was no time for speculation; they had sunk but four destroyers. With guns silent and crews at stations, they steamed on through the storm, looking for that fifth long, low craft, and soon, through a break in the gray receding wall of spume into which they seemed to be rushing, they sighted her, quiet and inert but for her sluggish rolling—a two-masted craft, with gaffs aloft and the red ensign of England flying union down from her mainmast head—a merchant steamer in distress.

The battleship slowed down and lowered her boats. Before they were well clear of her side the listening officers on the bridge heard the exclamatory words of the men that manned them, telling of oil—oil upon the oars, *oil upon the sea*.

"Yes," said the rescued steamer

skipper, as he told of his plight a little later, "she's a tank-steamer and was doomed for the bottom anyhow when those torpedo boats came up. But it wasn't them that sunk her and spread all this oil about—it was the act of God. Something came down sidewise out o' the sky—a meteor, I think—and went right through us. Curious—it left a round hole, about thirteen inches across."

"It was most certainly the act of God," said Mr. Parmlee reverentially, as they discussed it a little later.

"Finnegan's bullhead luck," commented the irreverent engineer.

"You are both right," said Dr. Bryce. "It was Finnegan's subliminal intelligence acting through the outlet of his muddled brain."

"D'you mean to say," queried the engineer, "that he had intelligent knowledge of what he was doing?"

"No, not as ordinarily understood. Nor was he the victim of false auto-suggestion, as we thought. But he had subconscious knowledge of the presence, over the horizon and in our path, of the four destroyers and the tank-steamer. He could only express his uneasiness in terms of objective consciousness—that is, when he thought of bad gun-platforms he was impelled to seek the captain. When he thought of the inefficiency of big guns against torpedo craft he was impelled to speak of it. He knew there was a possibility that at a certain moment of the ship's swing the range of the gun and the distance to the steamer would coincide, and he went to the turret. His all-night worry over the weight aloft and his firing the gun to get rid of it were only outlets for the subliminal knowledge of coming danger, and the remedy—oil upon the sea."

The surgeon had waxed fairly eloquent, but the engineer remained unconvinced.

"I can't believe that," he said, with an incredulous frown. "You're a wonder, doctor, at explanations; but it's my private opinion that Finnegan was simply and beautifully drunk."